

SPOTLIGHT

IDWTM
ONE SHOT

McCarthy
Coller
Lafuente

THE **TRANSFORMERS**
FORMERS



DRIFT
DIRECTOR'S CUT

**Written by
SHANE MCCARTHY**

**Art by
CASEY W. COLLER**

**Colors by
JOANA LAFUENTE**

**Letters/Design by
CHRIS MOWRY**

**Original Editor
DENTON J. TIPTON**

**Director's Cut Editor
JOHN BARBER**



Special thanks to Hasbro's Clint Chapman, Joe Furfaro, Heather Hopkins, Jerry Jivoin, Joshua Lamb, Ed Lane, Mark Weber, and Michael Kelly for their invaluable assistance.

IDW © Licensed By: 

www.IDWPUBLISHING.com
IDW founded by Ted Adams, Alex Garner, Kris Oprisko, and Robbie Robbins

Ted Adams, CEO & Publisher
Greg Goldstein, President & COO
Robbie Robbins, EVP/Sr. Graphic Artist
Chris Ryall, Chief Creative Officer/Editor-in-Chief
Matthew Ruzicka, CPA, Chief Financial Officer
Alan Payne, VP of Sales
Dirk Wood, VP of Marketing
Lorelei Bunjes, VP of Digital Services
Jeff Webber, VP of Digital Publishing & Business Development

Facebook: facebook.com/idwpublishing

Twitter: [@idwpublishing](https://twitter.com/idwpublishing)

YouTube: youtube.com/idwpublishing

Instagram: instagram.com/idwpublishing

deviantART: [idwpublishing.deviantart.com](https://deviantart.com/idwpublishing)

Pinterest: pinterest.com/idwpublishing/idw-staff-faves



THE TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT: DRIFT DIRECTOR'S CUT. JUNE 2014. FIRST PRINTING. HASBRO and its logo, TRANSFORMERS, and all related characters are trademarks of Hasbro and are used with permission. © 2014 Hasbro. All Rights Reserved. IDW Publishing, a division of Idea and Design Works, LLC. Editorial offices: 5080 Santa Fe St., San Diego, CA 92109. The IDW logo is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Any similarities to persons living or dead are purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Idea and Design Works, LLC. Printed in Korea.

IDW Publishing does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories, or artwork.



THESE WILL
GET YOU IN, BUT
ONLY SO FAR AS
THE DOCKING
PLATFORM.

YOU WON'T
HAVE ACCESS TO
THE SHIP.

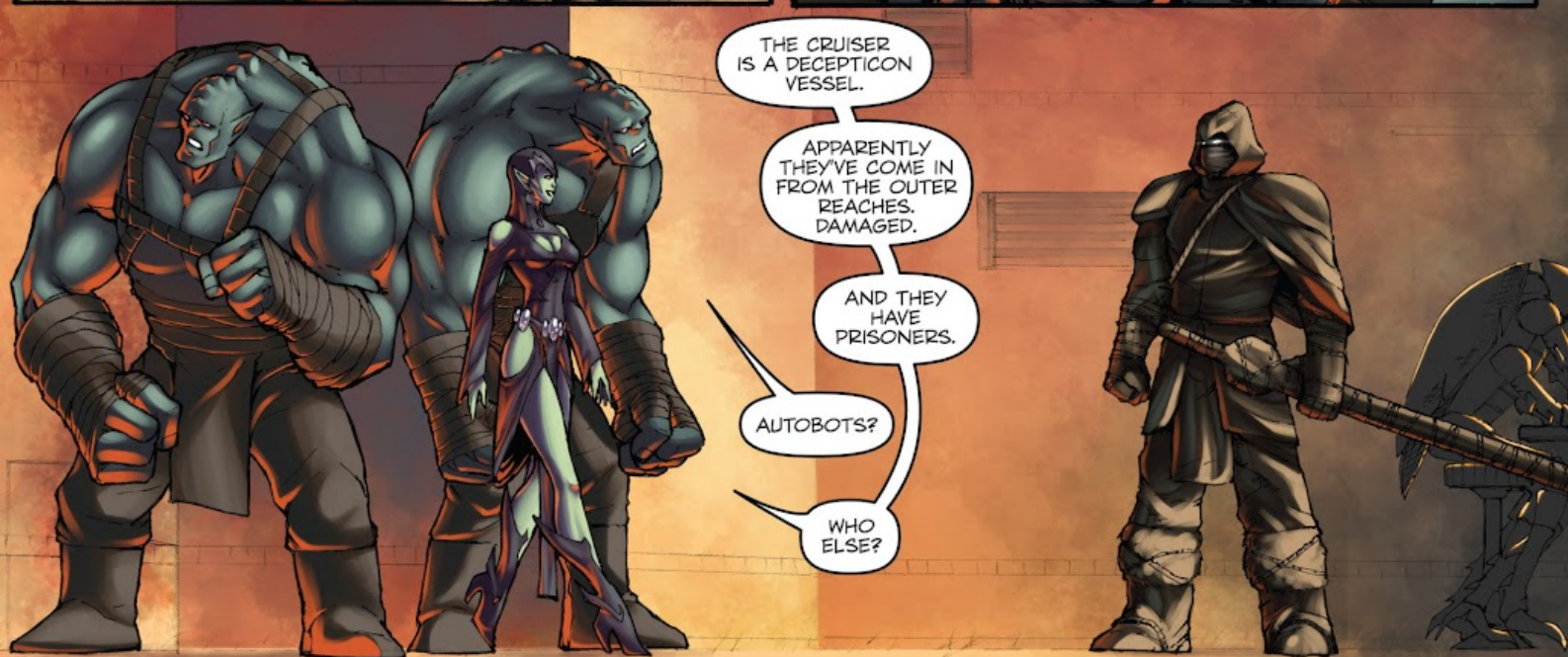
YOU'VE DONE
MORE
THAN
ENOUGH.
THANK YOU.



"THANK YOU"? YOU
PAY WELL, YOU'VE BEEN
HERE LONG ENOUGH TO
KNOW YOUR THANKS
ISN'T NECESSARY.



THE CRUISER, IT'S
CYBERTRONIAN...





I'M NOT SURE WHAT BUSINESS YOU HAVE WITH THE SHIP, BUT YOU MAY WISH TO RECONSIDER, FRIEND.

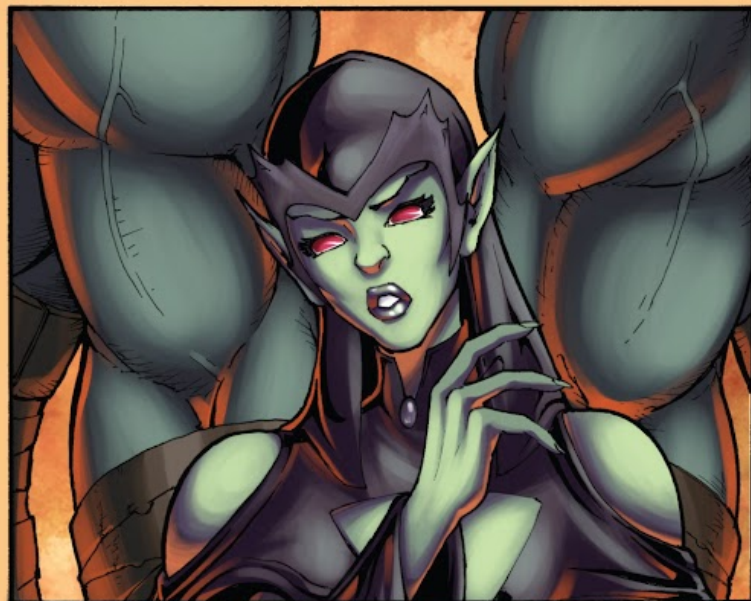
CYBERTRONIANS ARE A PLAGUE. WHEREVER THEY GO, DEATH AND DESTRUCTION FOLLOW.

EVERYONE ELSE IS SMART ENOUGH TO SIMPLY LEAVE THEM ALONE.



YOUR CONCERN IS—

IT'S NOT CONCERN. I TOLD YOU, YOU PAY W—

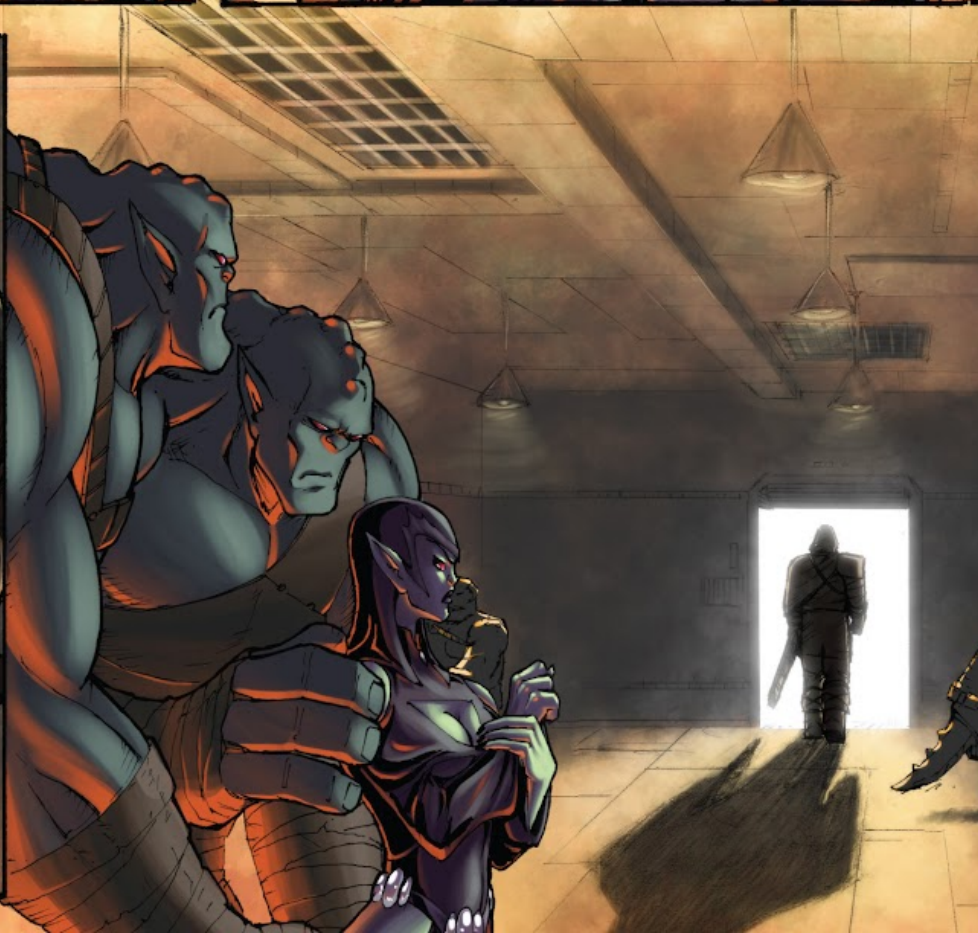


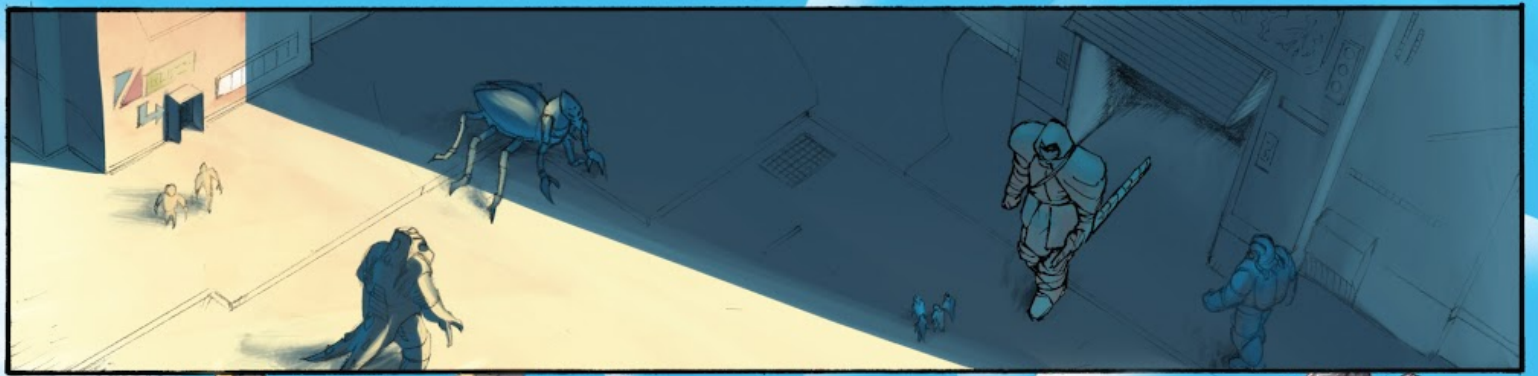
—YOUR ARM...

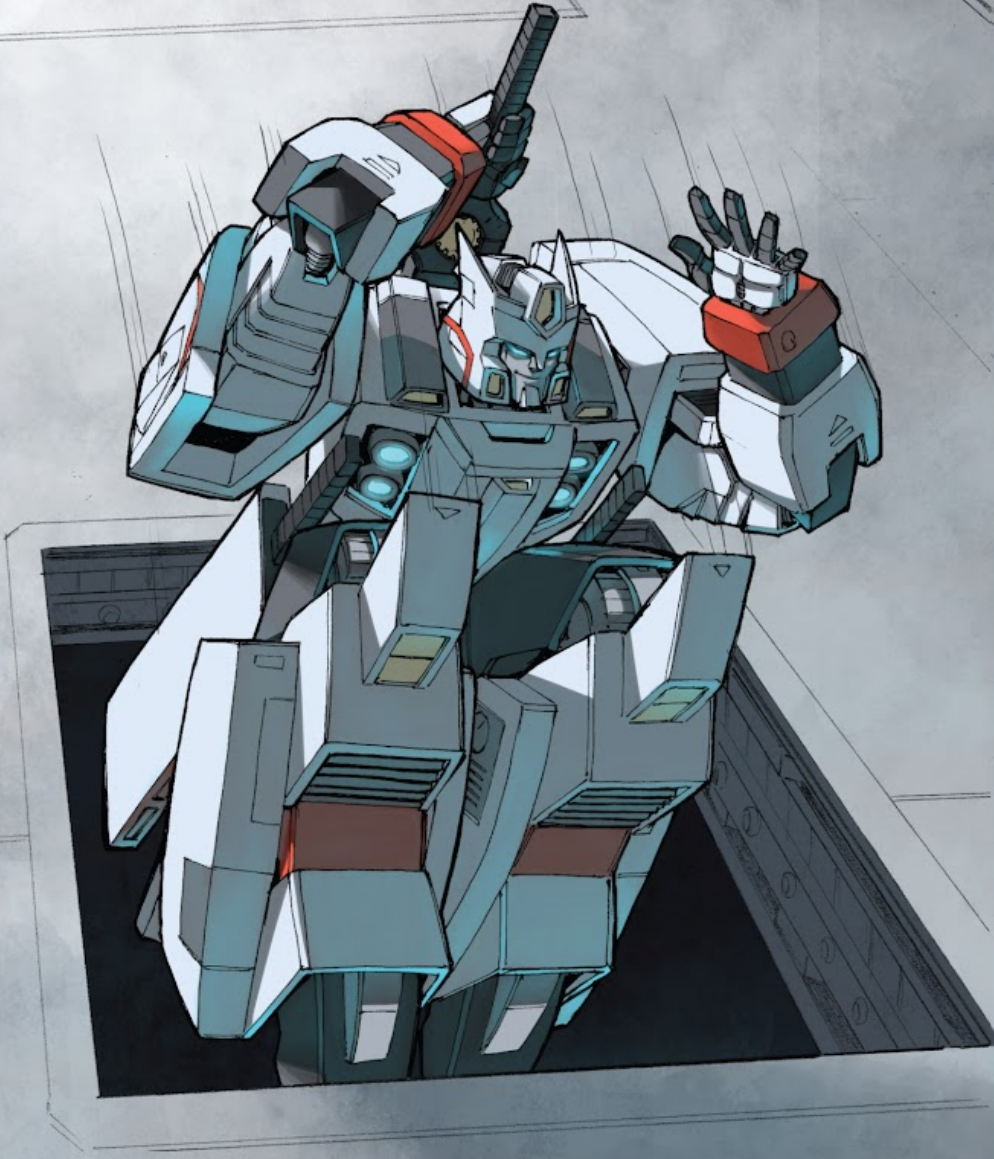
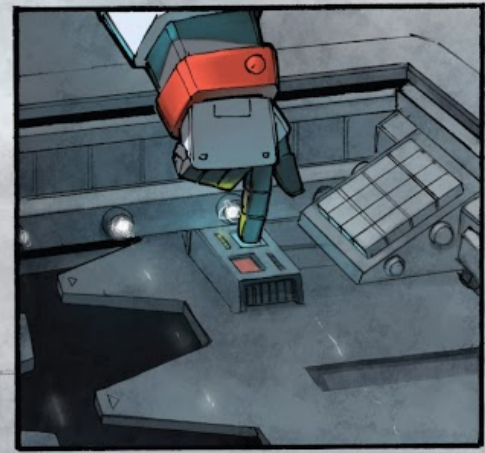
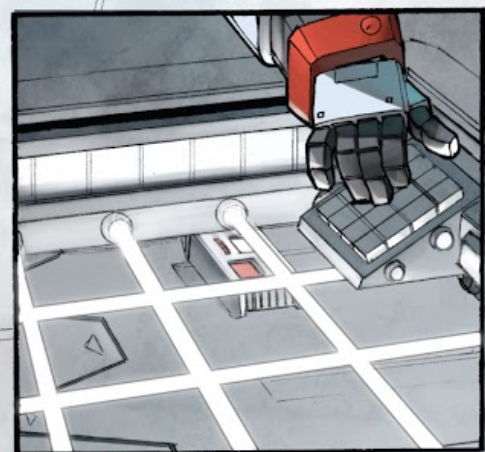
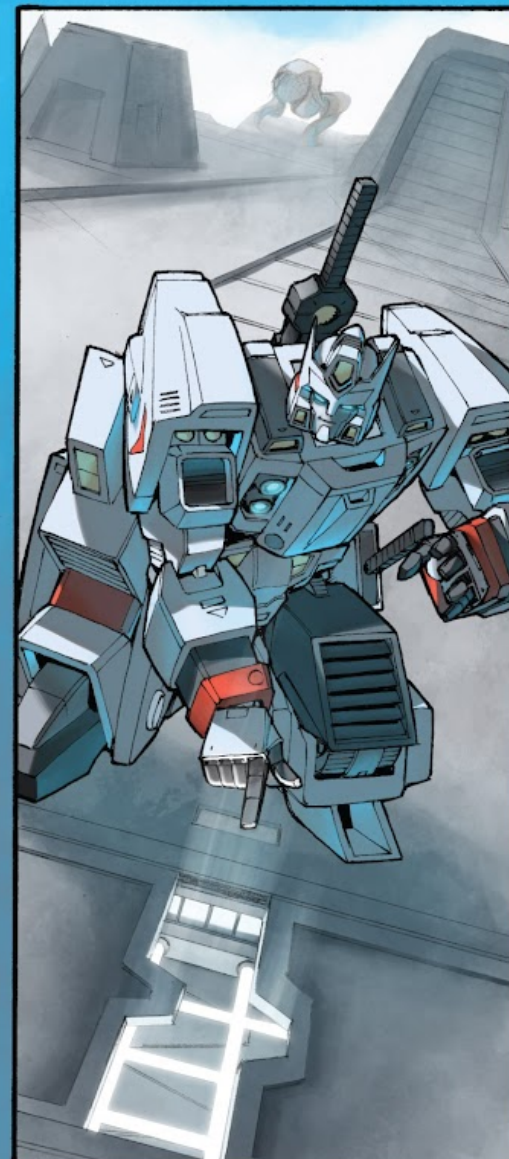
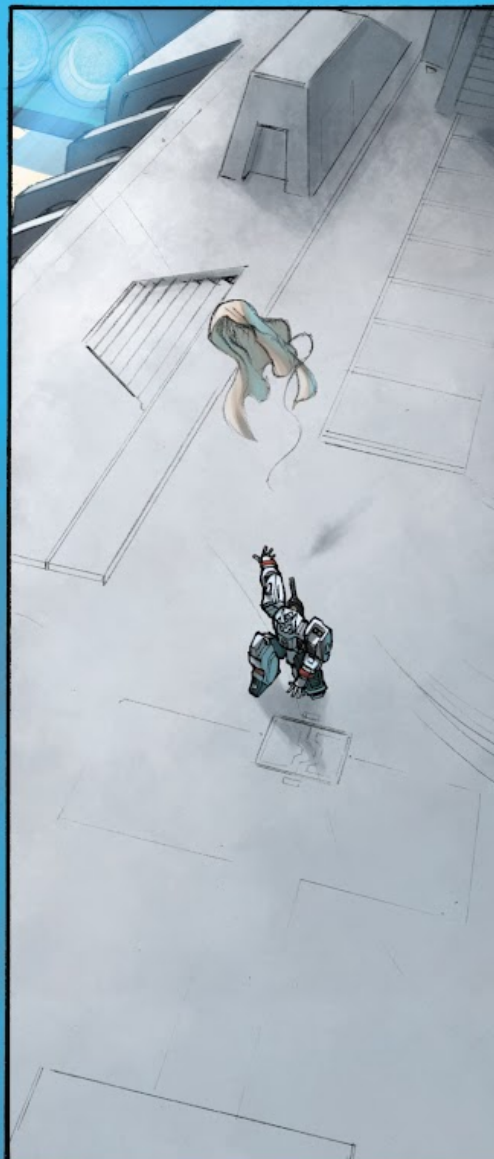
...YOU—YOU'RE ONE OF *THEM*.

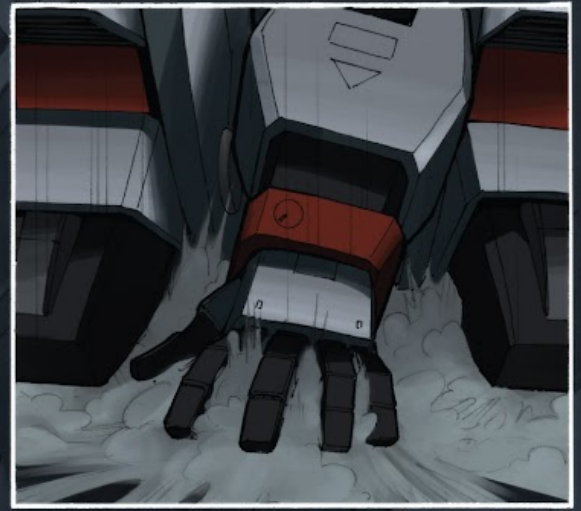


AGAIN, MY THANKS.











CLEAN 'EM
UP! WE'VE
GOT WORK
TO DO!



SO MUCH FOR
QUIET...



COMMANDER
TURMOIL!

SPEAK.



COMMANDER,
THE SHIP HAS
BEEN
BREACHED!



BREACHED?!
WHO DARES?!



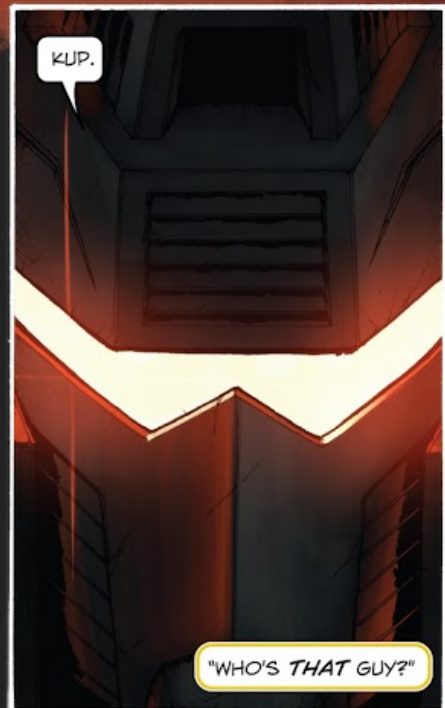
A SMALL
ASSAULT
FORCE.

OUR
SENSORS
PICKED
THEM UP?

NOT
EXACTLY.



THE GROUP
JUST—WELL—THEY JUST
BLEW A HOLE IN THE
SIDE OF THE SHIP.



KUP.

"WHO'S *THAT* GUY?"



HE'S NO AUTOBOT, THAT'S FOR SURE.

WELL HE'S NOT A DECEPTICON.

THAT SWORD ON HIS BACK LOOK FAMILIAR TO YOU?

THE SWORD. NO FACTION. IT'S UNBELIEVABLE BUT—GOTTA BE...



YOU!

WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' HERE?

WELL, I *WAS* TRYING TO SNEAK IN.

YEAH. WE DON'T DO SUBTLE.



THIS IS *EXTRAORDINARY*.

YOU'VE BEEN UPGRADED RECENTLY, RECONFIGURED, BUT IN A MANNER I HAVEN'T SEEN USED IN *CENTURIES*. YET THE TECHNOLOGY IS COMPLETELY COMPARABLE WITH—

—WHOSE WORK IS THIS?

AMAZING. YOU CAN TELL ALL THAT JUST BY LOOKING?

HNH. YOU DON'T KNOW THE *HALF* OF IT.



WE GOTTA MOVE.

NEW GUY, YOU'RE WITH US. WE GOTTA TALK ONCE THIS IS THROUGH. KEEP TO THE BACK AND—

ACTUALLY, IT'S PROBABLY BEST I TAKE THE LEAD.

NO OFFENSE, BUT I'M HERE FOR THE SAME REASON AS YOU.



AND I CAN TAKE YOU STRAIGHT TO THEM.



THEY'RE
HERE!

IT APPEARS THEY'RE
ATTEMPTING TO BREAK
THROUGH MY LOCKS.

HOLD 'EM OFF LONG
ENOUGH FOR US TO
CUT THROUGH THE
OTHER WALL.



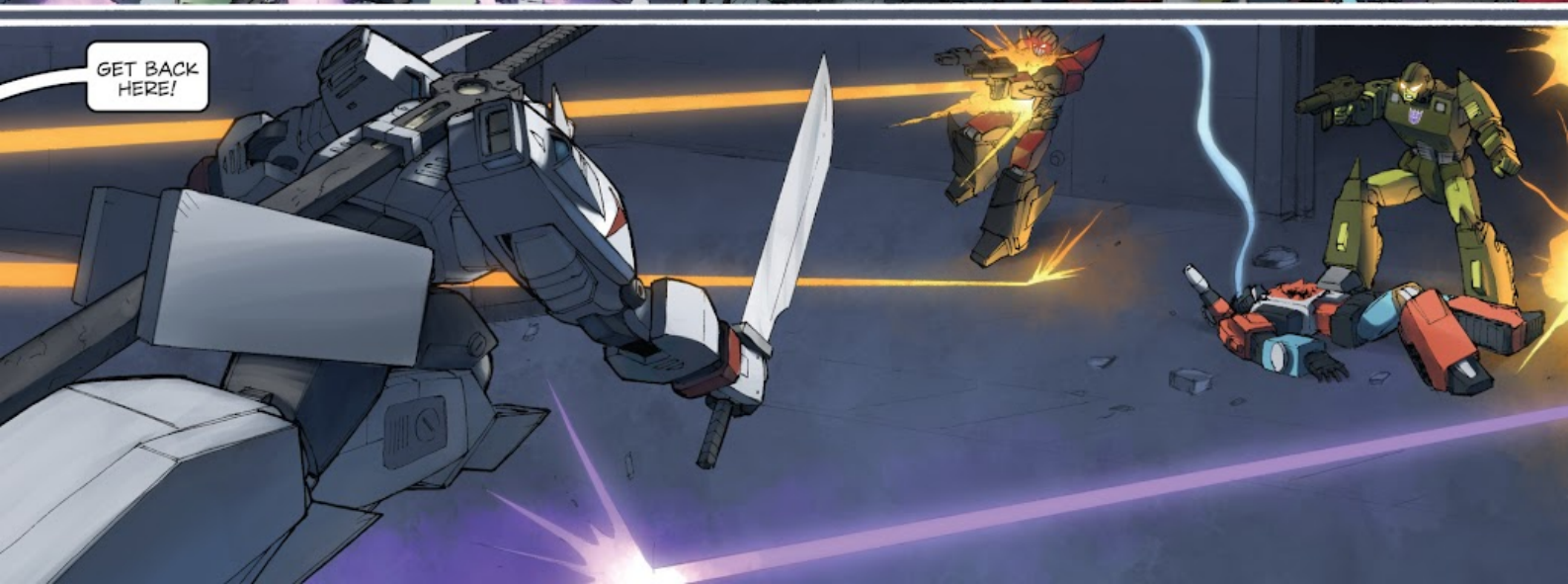
THAT'S ODD.
NOW THEY'VE
STOPPED.

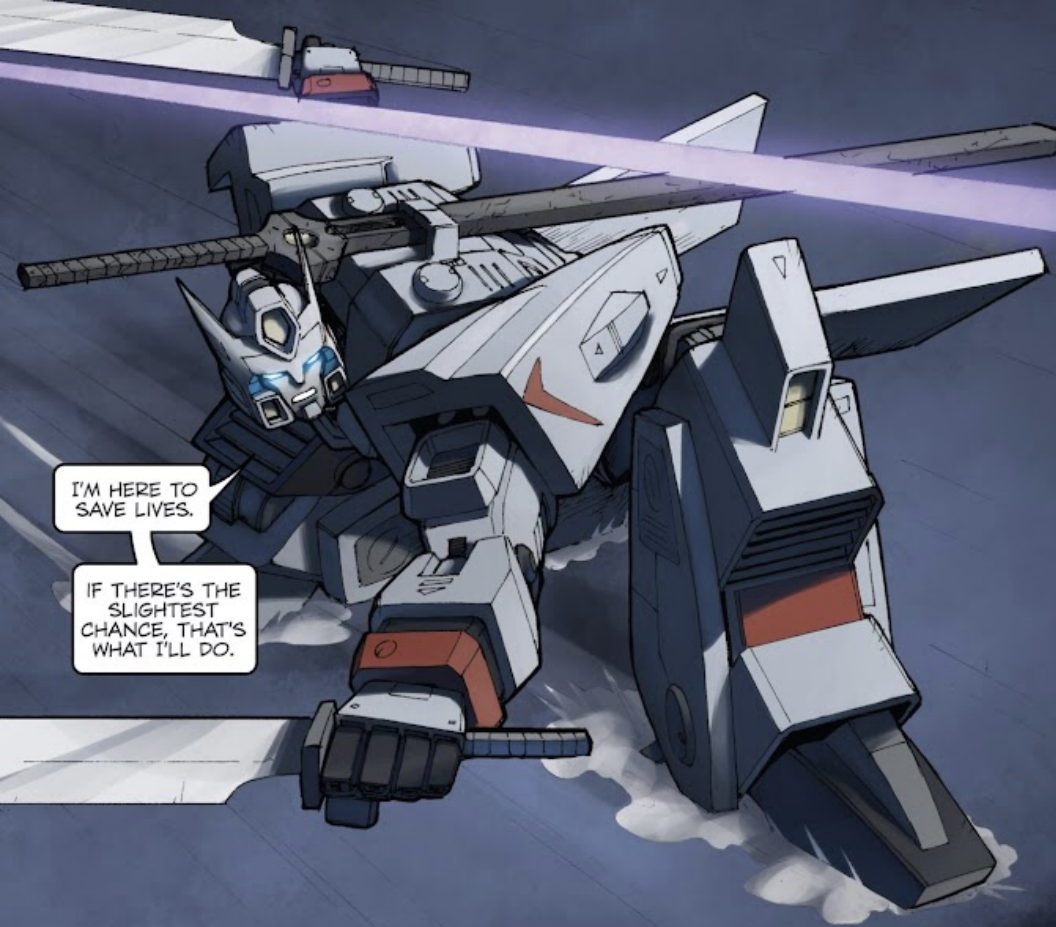
I'M GOING TO ADD
SEVERAL MORE
BLOCKS TO THE ONES
I ALREADY PLANTED
WITHIN THE SYSTEM.

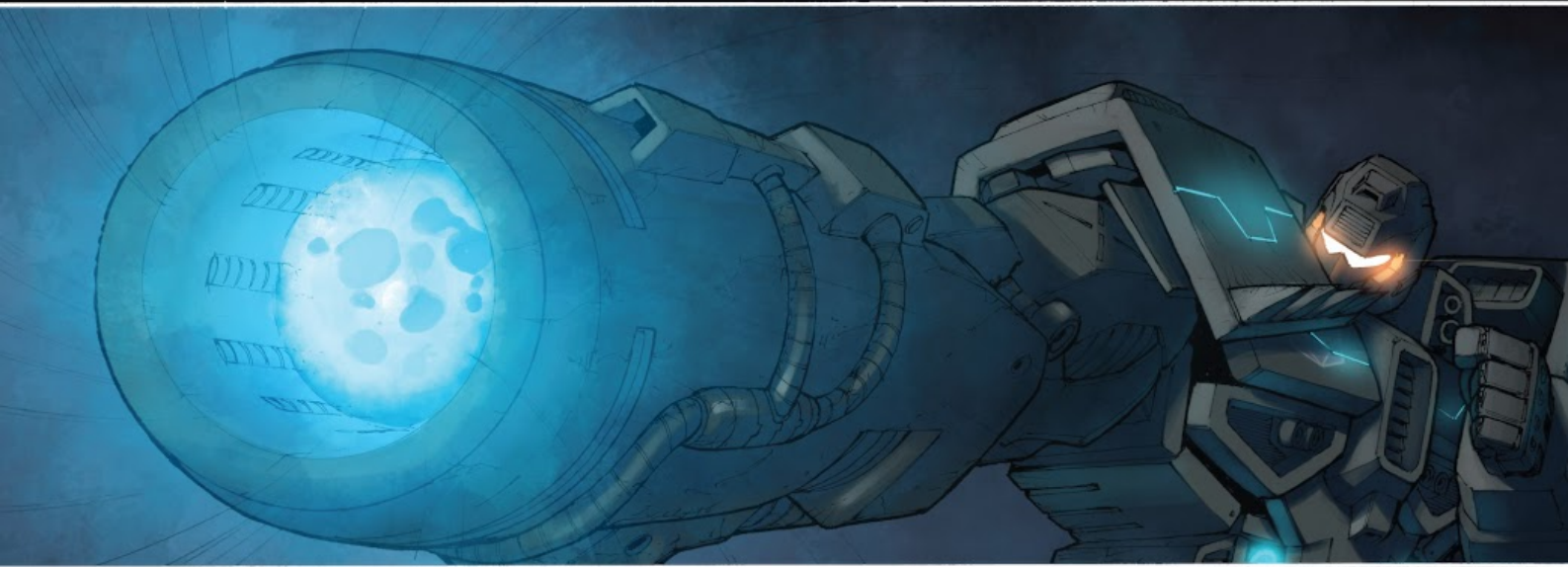
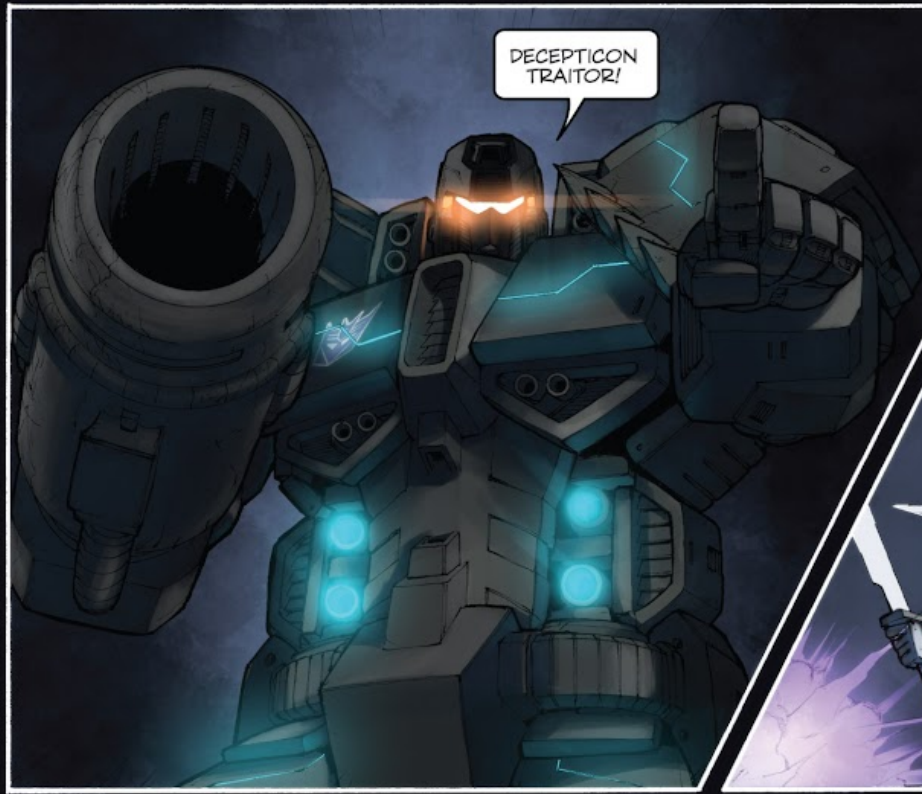
I CAN'T IMAGINE
THEY'LL BE ABLE TO
BREAK THROUGH
ANY TIME SOON.

IN FACT—









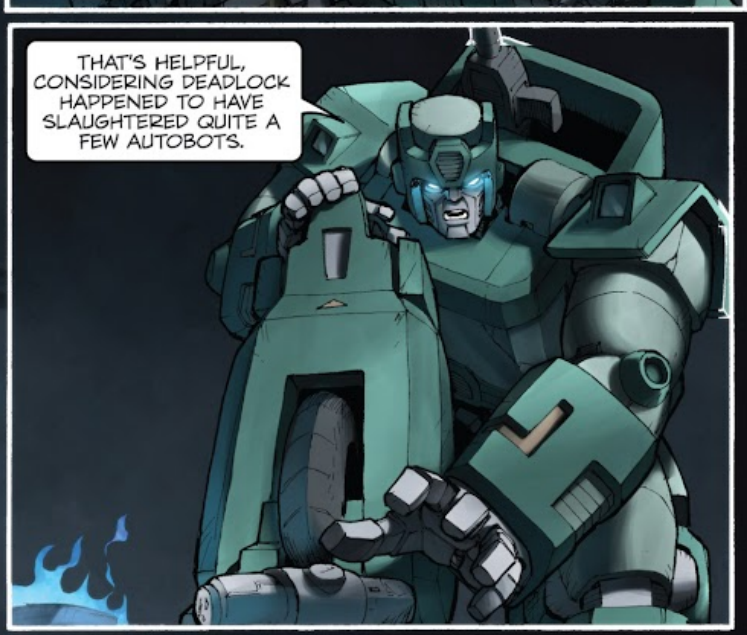


SO YOU *ARE* A DECEPTICON.

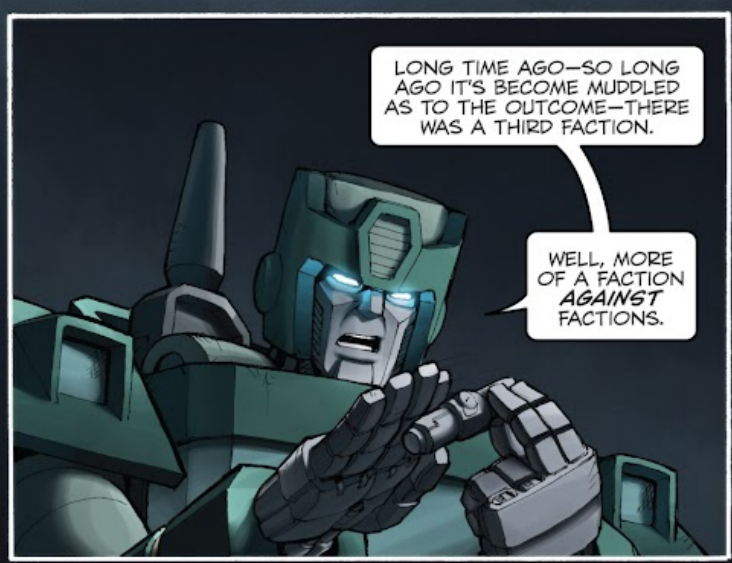
DEADLOCK.

NO.

I DON'T GO BY THAT NAME ANYMORE.

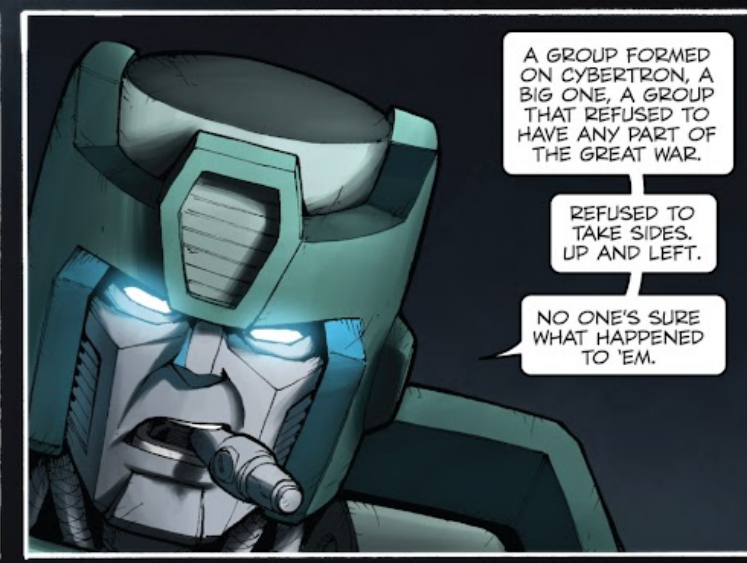


THAT'S HELPFUL, CONSIDERING DEADLOCK HAPPENED TO HAVE SLAUGHTERED QUITE A FEW AUTOBOTS.



LONG TIME AGO—SO LONG AGO IT'S BECOME MUDDLED AS TO THE OUTCOME—THERE WAS A THIRD FACTION.

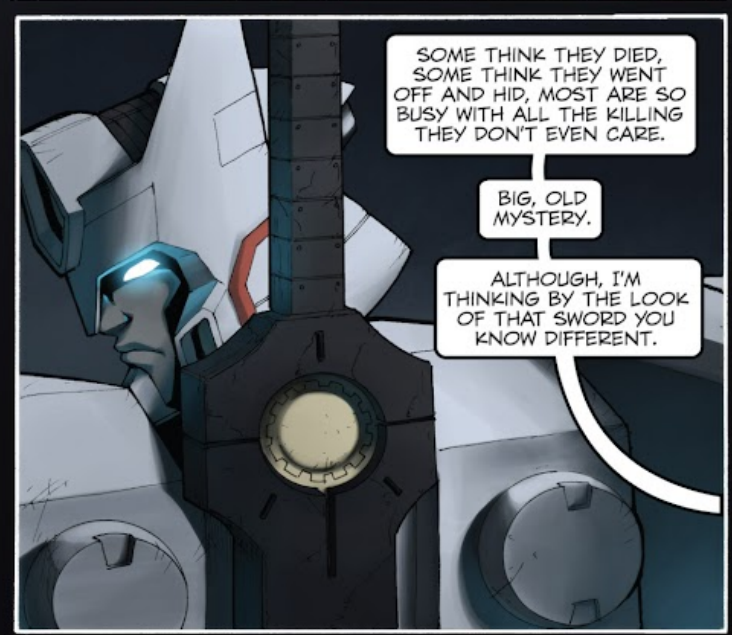
WELL, MORE OF A FACTION *AGAINST* FACTIONS.



A GROUP FORMED ON CYBERTRON, A BIG ONE, A GROUP THAT REFUSED TO HAVE ANY PART OF THE GREAT WAR.

REFUSED TO TAKE SIDES. UP AND LEFT.

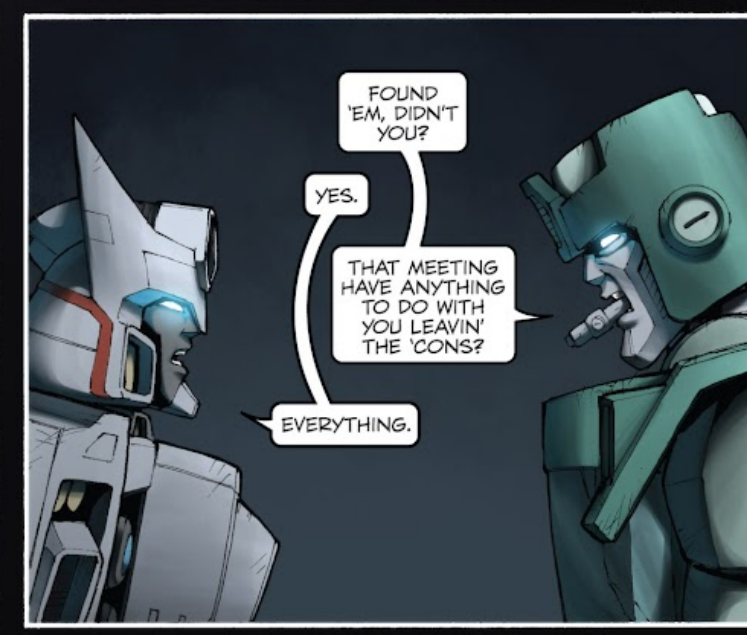
NO ONE'S SURE WHAT HAPPENED TO 'EM.



SOME THINK THEY DIED, SOME THINK THEY WENT OFF AND HID, MOST ARE SO BUSY WITH ALL THE KILLING THEY DON'T EVEN CARE.

BIG, OLD MYSTERY.

ALTHOUGH, I'M THINKING BY THE LOOK OF THAT SWORD YOU KNOW DIFFERENT.



FOUND 'EM, DIDN'T YOU?

YES.

THAT MEETING HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU LEAVIN' THE 'CONS?

EVERYTHING.

ALL THAT KILLING
AND YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR A
SECOND CHANCE...

I ALREADY
RECEIVED IT.

I'M LOOKING TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
TO USE THE CHANCE
I WAS GIVEN.

I KNOW
ALL ABOUT
SECOND
CHANCES.



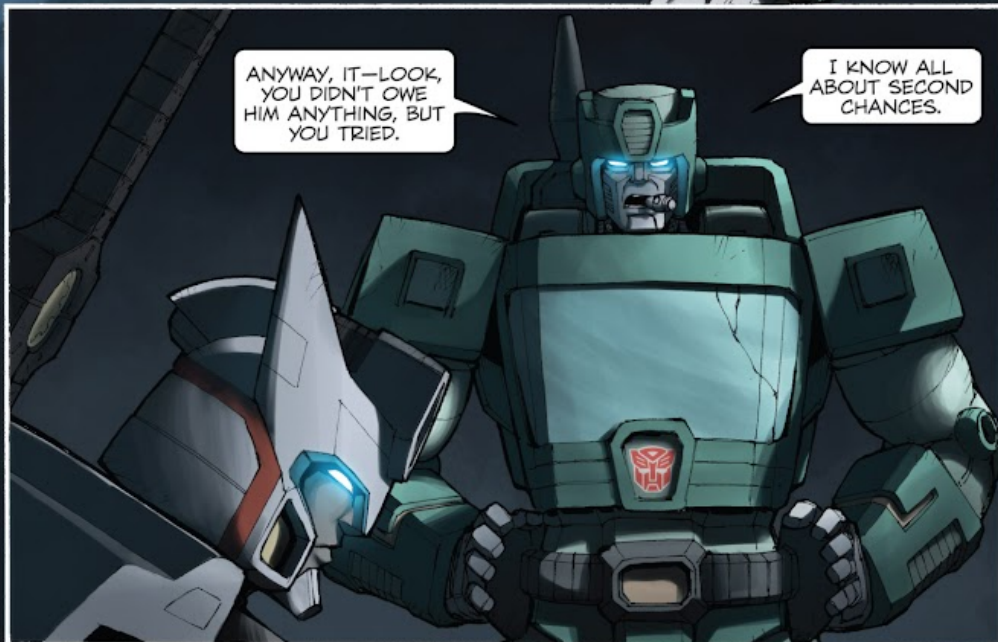
THAT 'BOT YOU
TRIED TO SAVE IN
THERE—PERCEPTOR—HE
WOULDN'T NORMALLY BE
ALONG. NOT THE TYPE.

HE WAS KEEPIN' AN
EYE OUT, FOR ME.
DESIGNED THIS NEW
BODY, FIXED IT SO I
WAS MY OLD SELF
AGAIN—**BETTER** EVEN.



ANYWAY, IT—LOOK,
YOU DIDN'T OWE
HIM ANYTHING, BUT
YOU TRIED.

I KNOW ALL
ABOUT SECOND
CHANCES.



WE BETTER GET
A MOVE ON.

WAIT.



I KNOW I'M
NO AUTOBOT.

I'M NOT
SURE WHAT
I AM, BUT...

...HOW WOULD
YOU FEEL ABOUT
BRINGING THIS
WHOLE PLACE
DOWN?



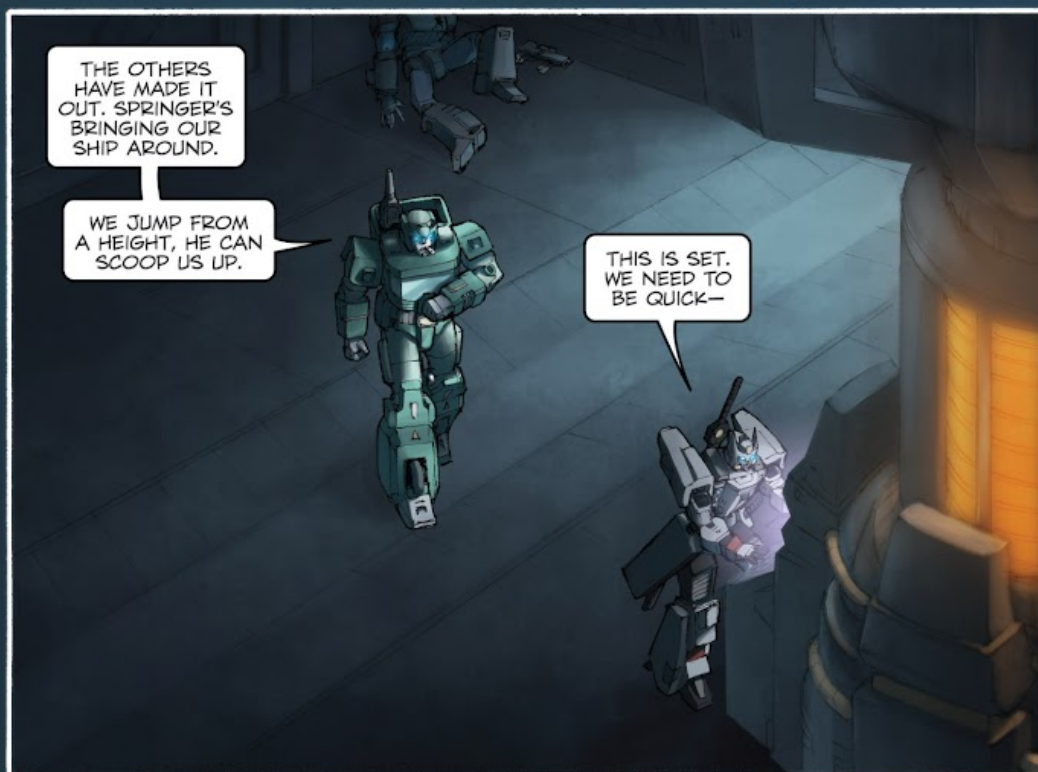
I'M LISTENIN'.



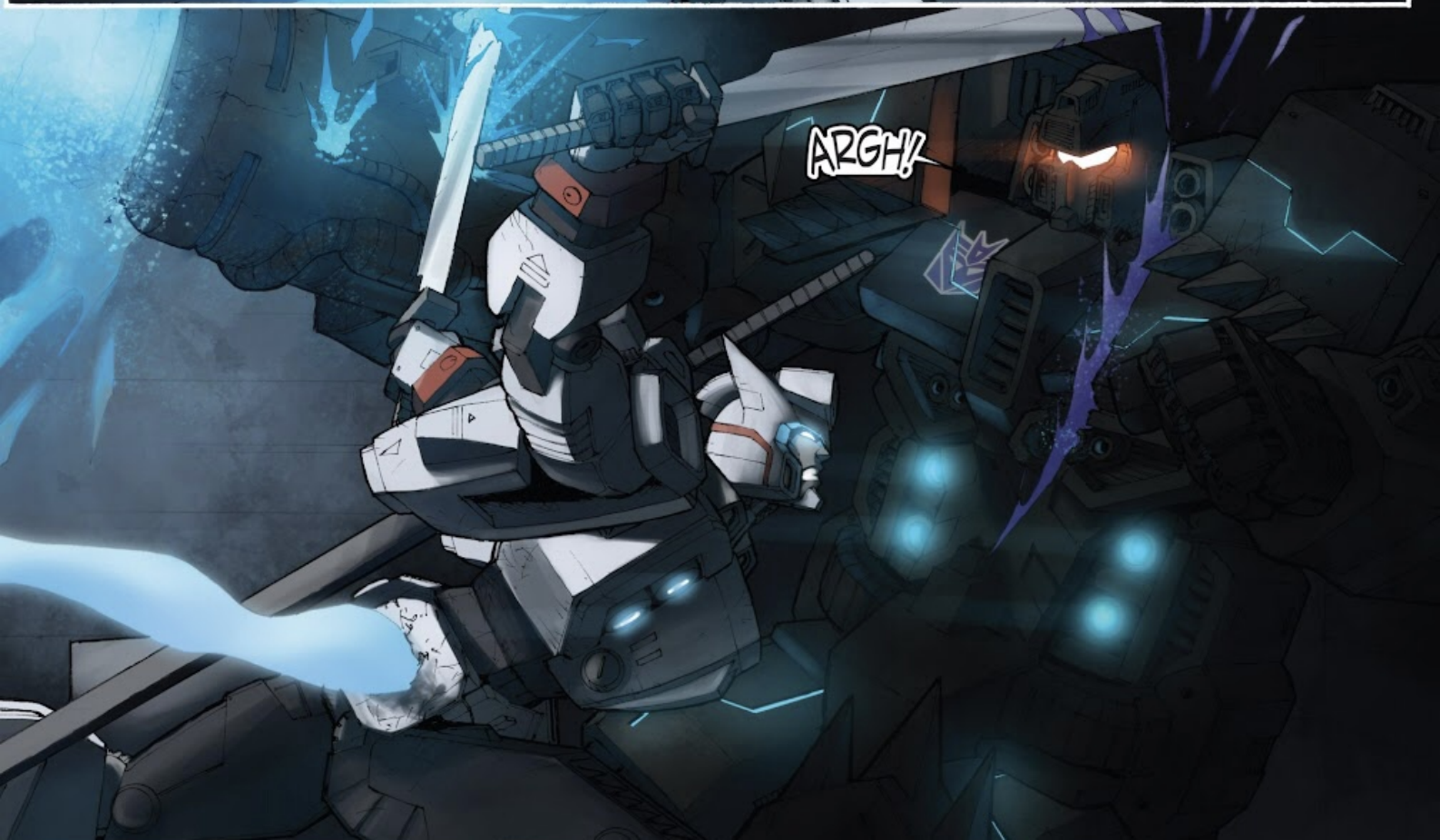
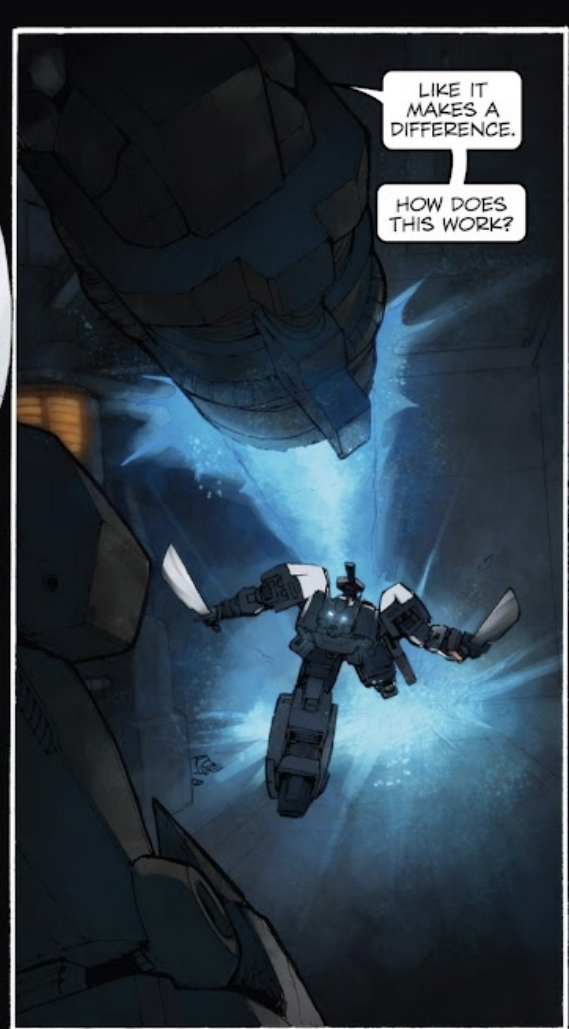
ALMOST
DONE.

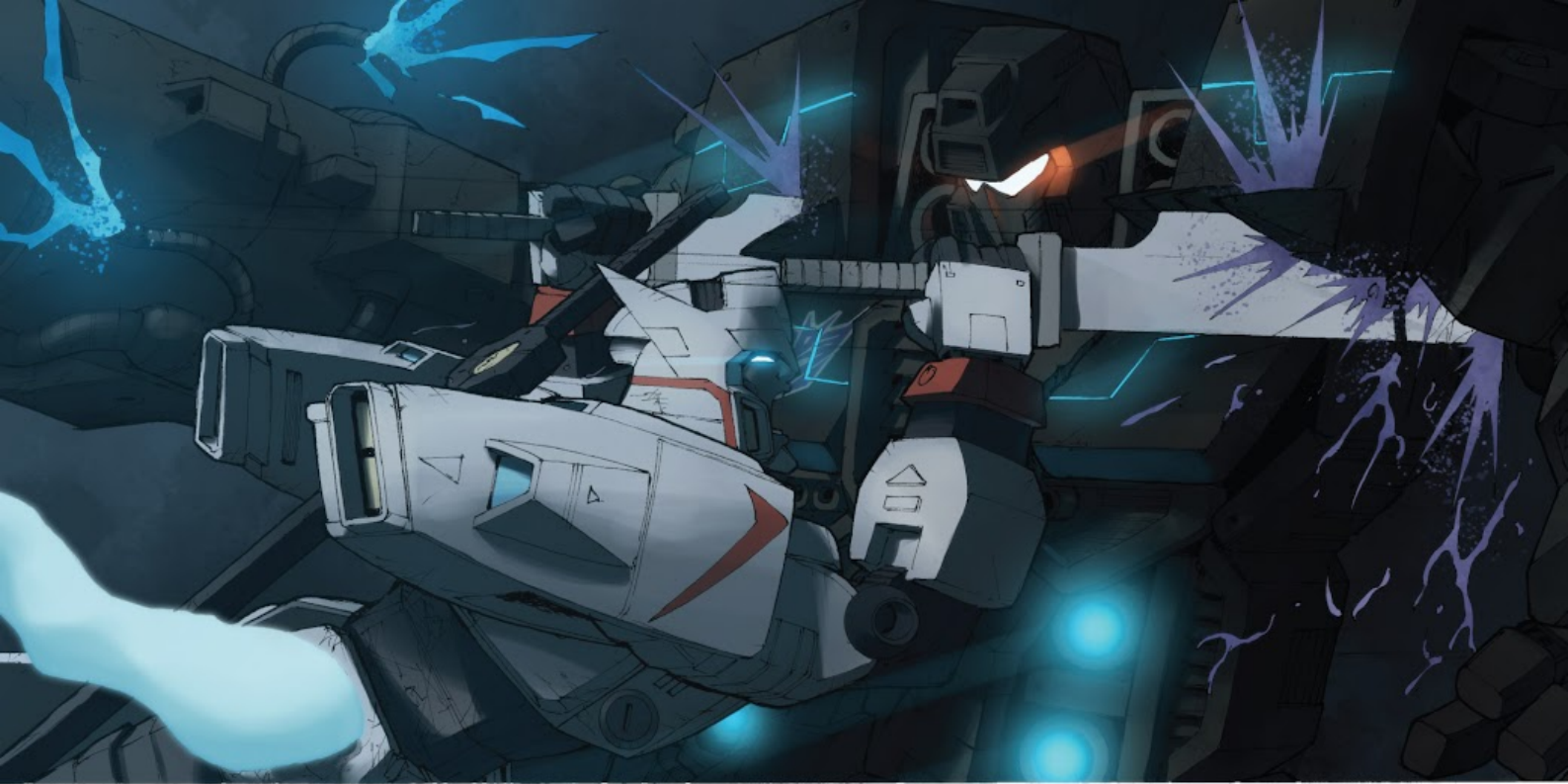
THE SHIP WILL
BE FORCED TO
ACHIEVE ORBIT.

SOMETIME
BETWEEN NOW
AND THEN THIS
WILL OVERLOAD
AND TEAR THE
SHIP APART.









WE'RE GOING ABOUT
THIS THE WRONG
WAY, *ALL* OF US!

AFTER
COUNTLESS
CENTURIES OF
FIGHTING...

...THE AUTOBOTS ARE
A *STEP* AWAY FROM
WHAT WE WERE WHEN
ALL THIS *STARTED*.

AND US—THE DECEPTICONS
HAVE BECOME SOMETHING
WORSE THAN ANY OF US
COULD HAVE *IMAGINED*.

THEY'LL *NEVER*
ACCEPT YOU.

YOU'RE
NOTHING BUT
A BROKEN
OUTCAST.

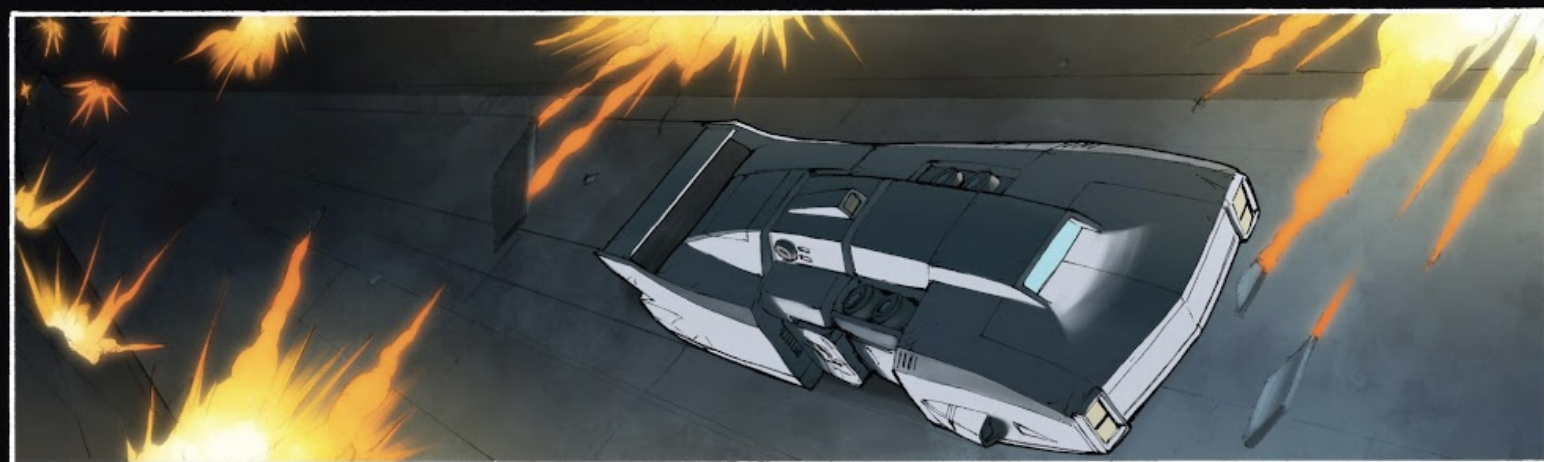
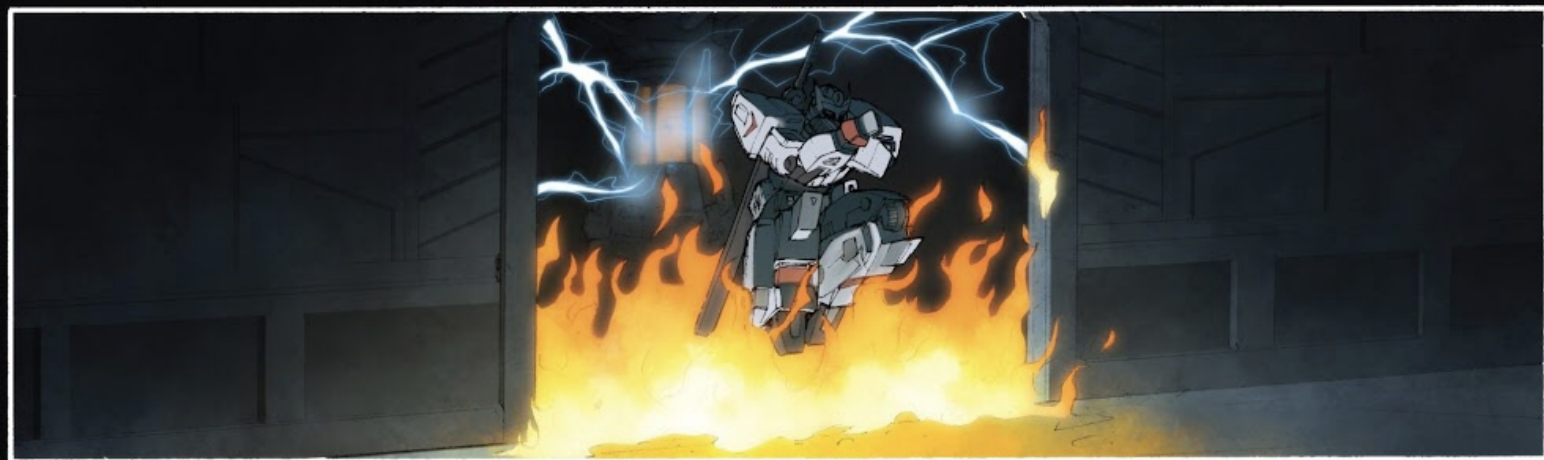
DO IT.
KILL ME.

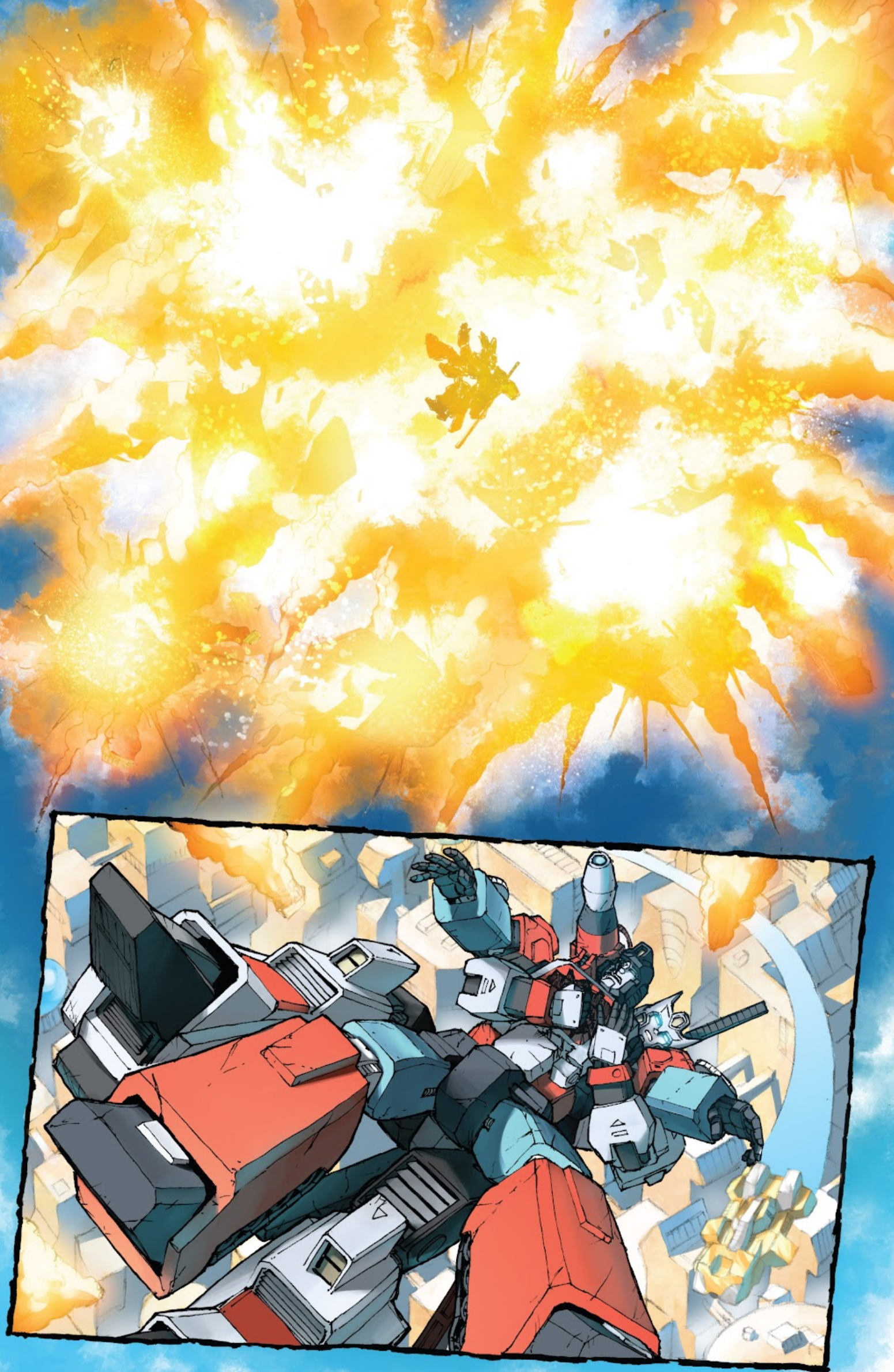
KILL ME
AND RUN.

PROVE YOU'RE
NOTHING MORE
THAN WHAT YOU
WERE WHEN
YOU LEFT.

IT'S WHAT
YOU CAME
HERE TO DO.

I *KNOW*
WHAT I CAME
HERE TO DO.







I'VE MADE CONTACT WITH THE TRION. WE'LL BE DOCKING SHORTLY.

THEY'VE BEEN INFORMED, ALL SIX AUTOBOTS RETRIEVED AND ACCOUNTED FOR.



SEVEN.

SEVEN?



I'M FORMING A NEW UNIT. I WANT YOU ON IT.



WHAT DO YOU SAY? WILLING TO WEAR THE BADGE?

KUP—



OF COURSE.



KUP, THIS ISN'T WISE...

HE PROVED HIMSELF DOWN THERE. YOU SAW IT.

THERE'S MORE TO FIGHTING THIS WAR THAN JUST BLOWIN' OFF HEADS.

BESIDES, YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW...



...EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE.

END.

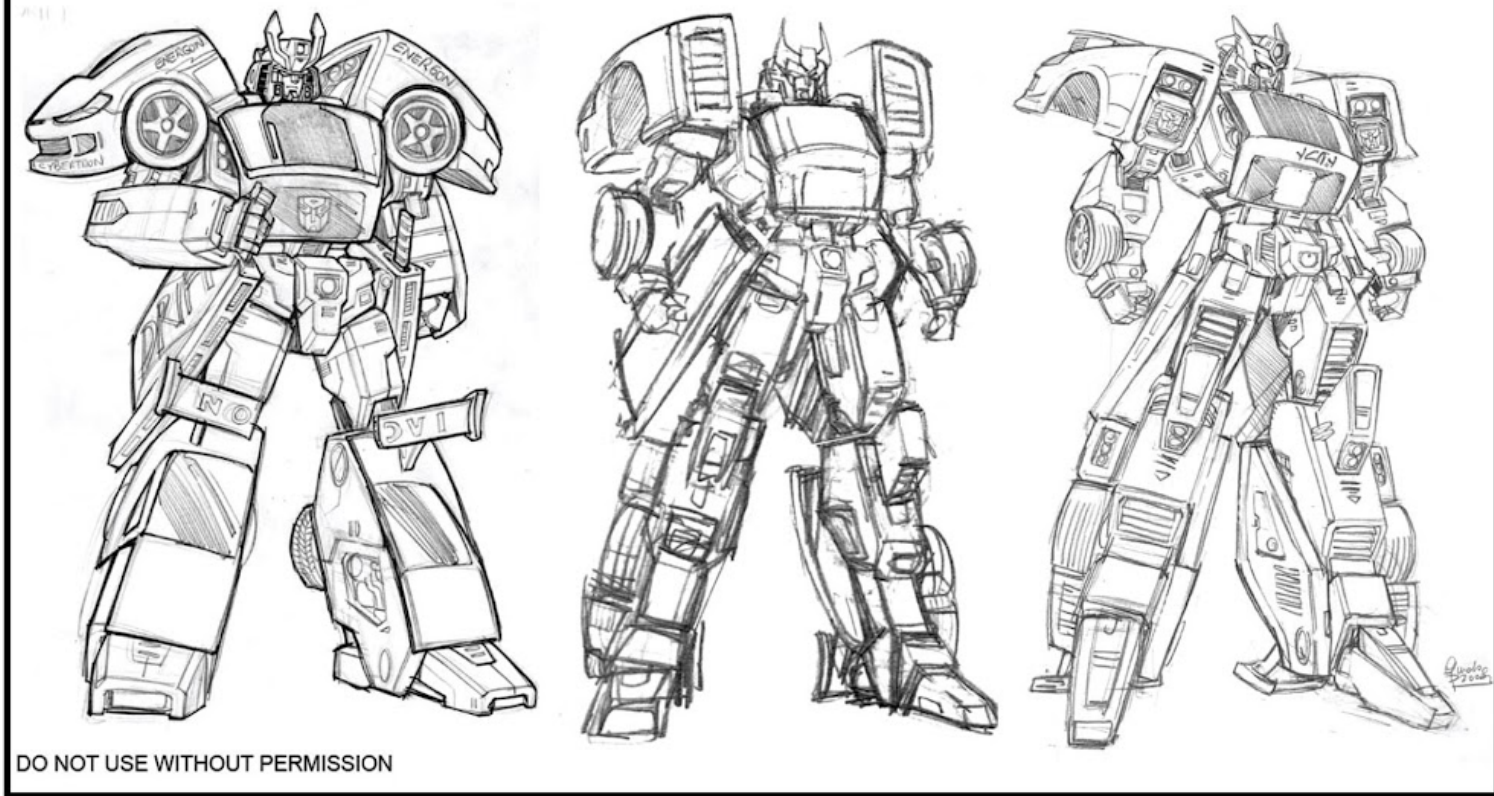
DRIFTING THROUGH LIFE!



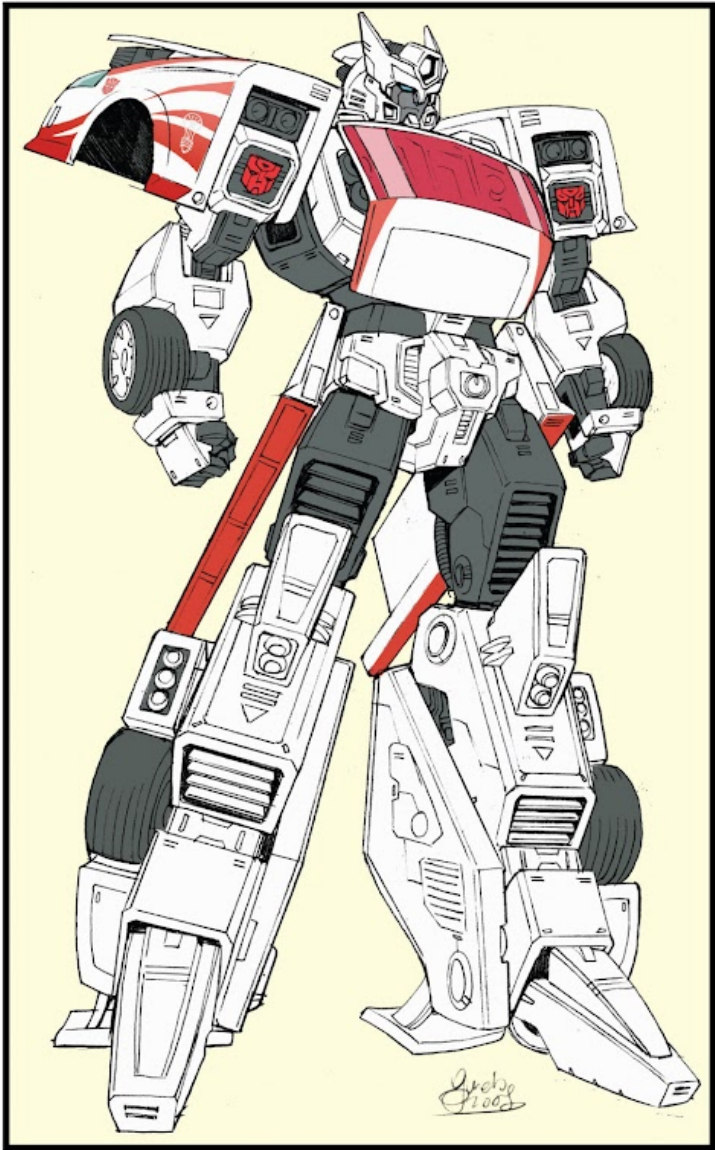
Transformers editor John Barber talks to the comic book creative teams that have told Drift's story from inception until today!

Drift's first appearance anywhere—*All Hail Megatron* #5, published November 26, 2008. (He's the dangerous-looking guy on the right.)
Art by Guido Guidi, colors by Josh Burcham.

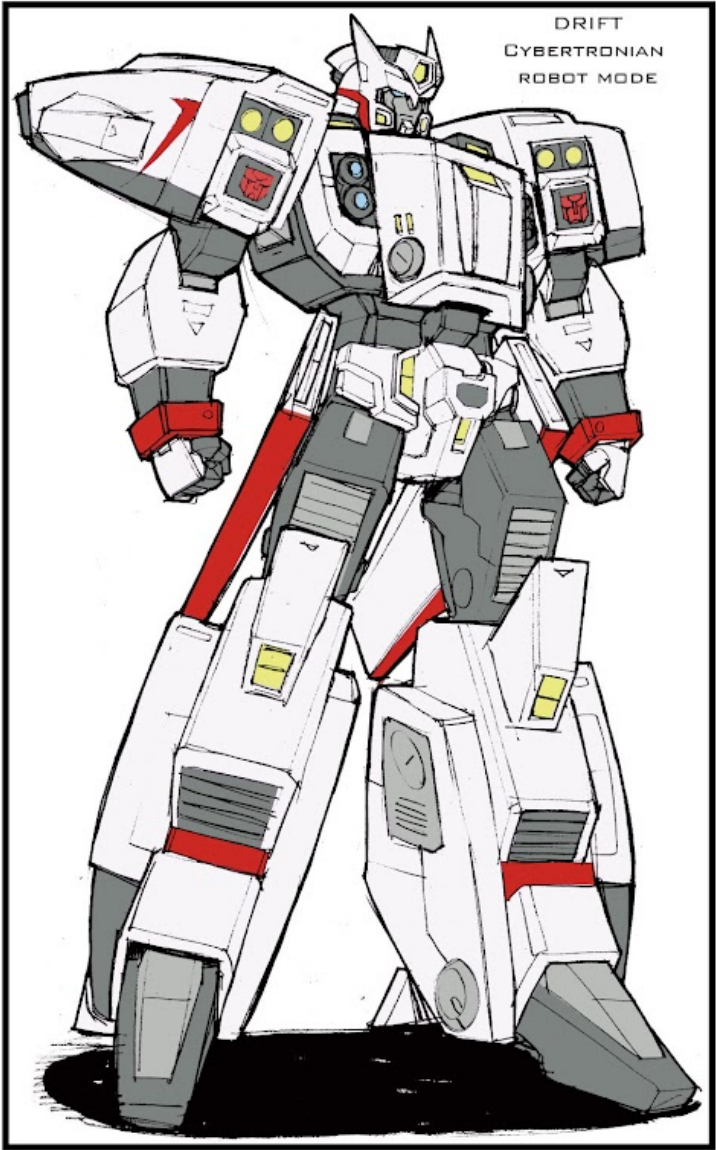
IDW "DRIFT" CONCEPT SKETCH DEVELOPMENT



Guido Guidi's early concept sketches for Drift.



Guido Guidi's color concept of Drift's Earth mode.



Guido Guidi's Drift Design, which appeared as a Retailer Incentive cover for *All Hail Megatron* #5.

Drift first appeared in 2008 in the world-shattering *Transformers: All Hail Megatron* 12-part comic-book epic, written by Shane McCarthy and drawn by Guido Guidi (with the help of several other talented artists). Since then, he's appeared across comics, toys, and this summer in the blockbuster *Transformers: Age of Extinction* film. I sat down with some of the key figures in comics who helped shape Drift's journey from inception to the present day—and beyond!

Let's start with a little background: Shane McCarthy, how did you come to be writing Transformers comics, and what was the landscape like when you came onboard?

SHANE MCCARTHY: Chris Ryall... It's all Chris' fault. Chris [who's the Editor in Chief of IDW Publishing] and I had known each other for a little while prior to my work on Transformers; we'd been chatting and he wanted to know what I'd do with Transformers if I were to take on the writing chores. Change was his only real requirement; the rest was up to me. Simon [Furman, long-time Transformers writer] was coming to the end of his great run and so the question was "where do we take it next?"

Chris and I talked a lot—we're talking a continual stream of email after email after email (that's what a continuous stream is). Chris and I email a fair amount—we still do—but, man, it was non-stop craziness back then. The potential was huge and Chris was super-supportive of everything; we were both loving the experience.

Guido Guidi—you'd been working on Transformers comics going back to the previous license-holder, Dreamwave. How'd you start out—and how was the transition to IDW?

GUIDO GUIDI: I was a longtime Transformers fan (and fan artist) since the start of the franchise in the mid '80s. When Dreamwave gained the license (in 2002), I posted some of my artwork on their forum and got contacted.

Then, after Dreamwave's demise I started working on Transformers again in 2005, after getting in contact with IDW Editor in Chief Chris Ryall, a while after IDW got the license.

I started with creating variant covers for the first IDW miniseries, *Infiltration*. The transition was very smooth and back then—like today—it was really great to have all the artistic freedom that IDW gives to their artists... and I was very glad to finally be able to produce some classic G1-inspired artwork, as well as original projects like *Hearts of Steel* [an alternate-universe steampunk-inspired Transformers series]!

How did the character of Drift come about?

SM: I was choosing the roster for who I wanted to include and Chris and I both agreed it needed to be the "classic" lineup (old-school fan here). While I was reading up on all the IDW books it struck me that, with this new take on the mythos, the Autobots weren't as heroic as they've been

previously; they didn't seem to have the same respect for life that I'd seen in them previously. My immediate thought was that, due to centuries of fighting, they'd lost their way, somewhat. I got to thinking what would it be like if you didn't want to be a part of either side—surely there were Cybertronians that didn't want to be part of the war. That all led to the idea of someone that was once a Decepticon and was now an Autobot—but a reluctant one. I also had the idea of a Transformers character that was also a drift racing car (two very popular things in Japan).

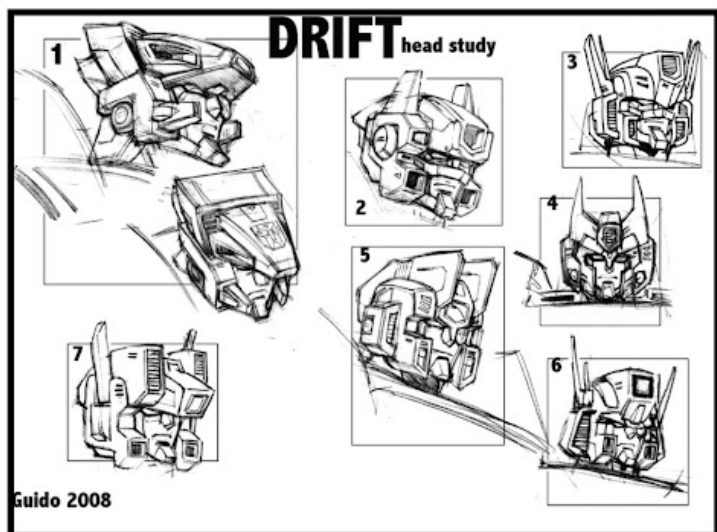
I emailed Chris my idea and he liked it but said Hasbro didn't go for new Transformers. It wasn't a huge loss; Drift was a cool idea but not a make or break for *All Hail Megatron*. However, he said he'd give it a shot and show them. Hasbro loved the concept and wanted to see more. Chris and I were shocked but excited, so I got down to fine-tuning who he was and what he looked like.

GG: Drift's introduction would have served to expand the Transformers universe by adding new aspects to the mythology. Also, from a design point of view, his purpose was to also pay homage to the Japanese origins of the Transformers brand.

For example, Drift's big sword covers both of these aspects: it's a Japanese homage, and also a key that expanded the Transformers universe and mythology (with the Circle of Light).



Drift in action for the first time, from *All Hail Megatron* #6.
Art by Guido Guidi, colors by Josh Burcham.



Drift head concepts by Guido Guidi.

What was the design process like? Were you guys working with the brand team at Hasbro?

SM: Guido, who is amazing (seriously, getting this guy's artwork via email is like Christmas morning every time), came up with an initial design. We chatted about it, changed some things, made him a little leaner and then boom, he was perfect. I had no contact with Hasbro, but I'm not sure if Guido did.

GG: At first, Drift was a comic-only character with no toy planned, and his early concept sketches were quite different from the final design—sporting more heavy influences from Japanese Transformers and anime mecha, with a bulkier look. Even at that stage, I designed him with a mode-changing scheme in mind (inspired by G1 toys like Getaway and Pointblank).

Then, at some point during *AHM*, Hasbro became interested with the Drift concept enough to want him as a potential toy. At this point Shane suggested to rework the then-current design (and I'm glad he did!). In his opinion he should have been more lethal/fast looking, and he gave me a good direction—I had already done a similar redesign of Blurr.

So I went back to the drawing table and started tweaking the whole sketch with the Blurr design in mind. And the result was Drift as he appeared in *AHM*.

I also created a few color schemes for IDW/Hasbro to choose from—with a little clever input from colorist Josh Burcham, the red "bracelets" really nailed down the final look of Drift.

What did you think seeing the toy, when that came out?

GG: I remember when I saw the photos of the toy prototype. I was very happy with it! It was amazing to see how much of the character design went into the final toy, even if they had to change the car-mode. But the rest was really a great match to the comic character down to the tiniest detail—Hasbro and TakaraTomy [the Japanese company that also produces Transformers toys] did an amazing job in translating Drift in plastic form!

SM: Oh, I loved it. How could I not? I actually didn't know it was out at all. I mean, I knew they were making one, obviously, but that's all I'd heard; I didn't know when it was coming out. I got a call from a friend that his son had just chosen a toy at the shop and my friend was pretty sure it was Drift. That was a great moment, hearing a kid wanted to play with him. Gold.



Coller

It took me a few stores to track down the figure but when I found it, I have to say, it was a big moment for me. It was weird being one of, if not the last to know it was out, but at the same time it was just overwhelming to see him on the shelf. I had flashbacks to looking up at the shelf as a kid and painstakingly choosing which Transformers toy to buy (to this day I always regret not buying Ravage with my pocket money) and here I was looking at something I'd thought up.

This is kind of a loaded question, but what was the original fan reaction? I can say from experience that Drift today is pretty popular a character, and the original Drift limited series remains a strong seller and a fan-favorite.

SM: Oh there were fans that hated him for sure. *Hated* him. But hilariously they were from that whole subset of people that love to hate things they haven't even seen. They'd heard about him and hated him. We'd announced there was going to be a figure and people were calling us liars, ha ha. People were actually calling Chris Ryall a liar for saying a figure was coming out. They were so sure the whole world hated Drift that they couldn't imagine a figure coming out. It was hilarious.

I mean, look, if people don't like the character they don't like the character, but at least wait until he's out to lose your mind, right? It was so silly. As is usually the case, that was a tiny section of the fan-base, though. The majority, obviously (look at the sales), liked the idea, liked the character, and wanted more.

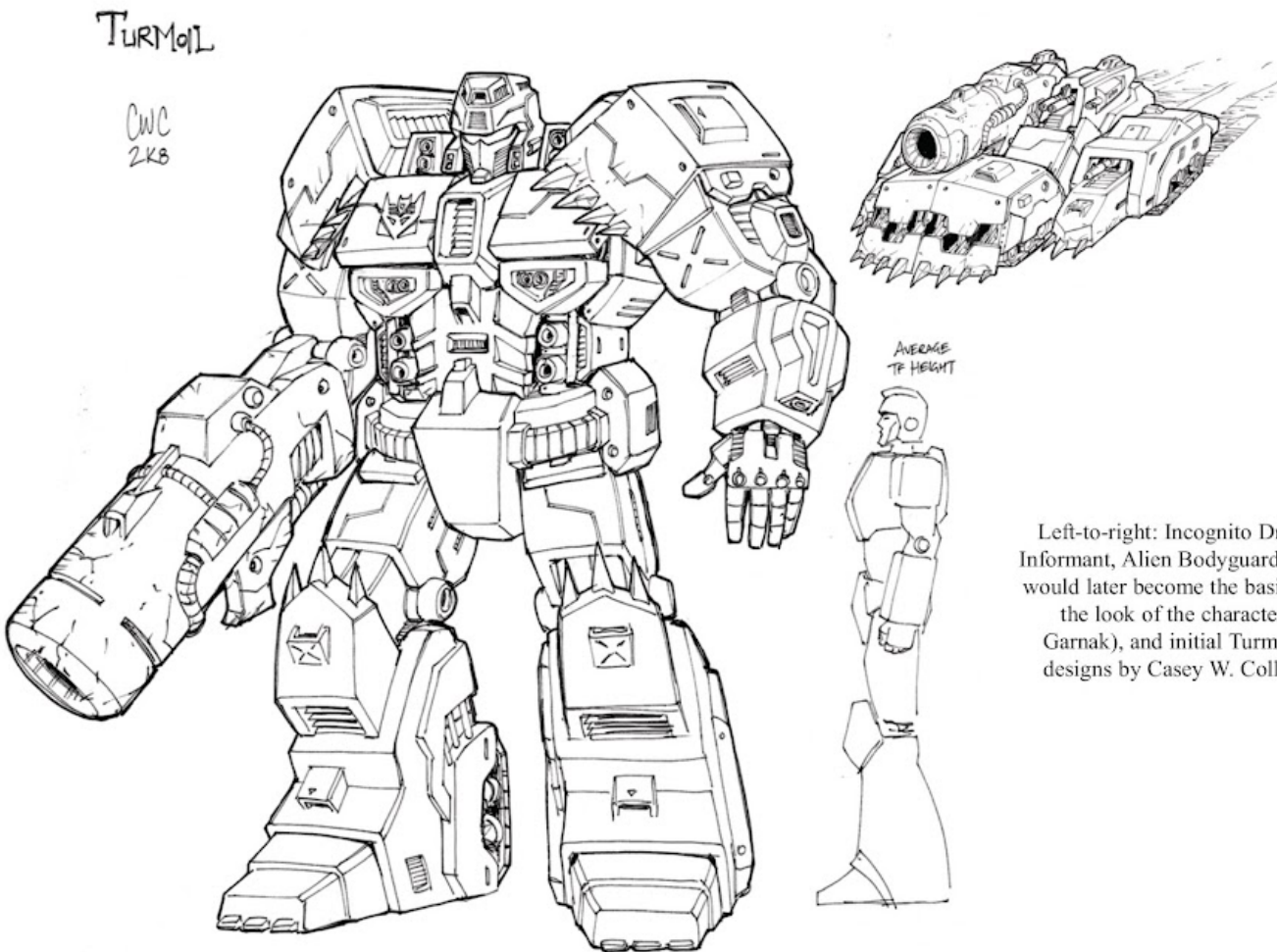
GG: Well, from what I noticed Drift got a pretty good fan-base since the start, but with reservations and sometimes "hate" by a part of the fandom. I think that was kind of an



Back of packaging for Hasbro's Drift toy.

expected reaction, due the fact that we put it among the G1 classic characters. I can understand how he was perceived as a sort of "intruder" at first.

If he had been put in another series, let's say *Armada*, I don't think we would have gotten the same reactions.



Left-to-right: Incognito Drift, Informant, Alien Bodyguard (this would later become the basis for the look of the character Garnak), and initial Turmoil designs by Casey W. Collier.

Have you seen the fans' opinions of the character change over time?

SM: I don't know if the people that hated him are now fans of him; I wouldn't have a clue. However, I think the crazy vitriol certainly died down. I don't spend time on forums or follow a lot of these things but it seems to me that there's certainly a sizeable fan base for the guy now. GG: Well, we're going to have a version of him in the next Transformers live action movie... so I think he performed quite well since his debut in 2009! That said, I think that today the character is widely accepted by the vast majority of fans, maybe even more so among the female readers—just my impression.

Drift next appeared in the one-shot Transformers Spotlight: Drift—which is reprinted in this very book. How did this comic come about? Was it during the run of All Hail Megatron?

SM: I'm a little hazy on whose idea this one was. It was definitely during the period I was writing *AHM*. I don't remember if it was Chris or Denton [J. Tipton, who was editing the Transformers comics at the time] that suggested it. I know that fan reaction was good so the idea of a *Spotlight* was a bit of a no-brainer. When the opportunity was presented I knew I had to tell the story of how he got to join the Autobots in the first place.

DENTON J. TIPTON: If I recall correctly, we were looking for more characters to include in the *Spotlight* series, and Drift was a natural choice, given his recent debut and mysterious background. At first, Shane wanted to delve into his origins, but that story was too big for one issue, so we concentrated on how Drift hooked up with Kup and the Wreckers. And later we revealed the origin in the *Drift* miniseries with Alex Milne on art duty.

Casey W. Coller—when did you get involved with Transformers, and how did you come to draw Transformers Spotlight: Drift?

CASEY W. COLLER: When I started working on *Spotlight: Drift*, I was still relatively new to comics. It was 2008, and I'd only done a handful of covers and pages for *All Hail Megatron*, as well as *Spotlight: Blurr*. Drift was my second full Transformers comic issue. I was approached by Denton J. Tipton about doing the interior art for the *Spotlight*, which I was thrilled about. I loved

working with Shane and [colorist] Joana [Lafuente] on *Blurr*, plus I had seen Guido's amazing design for Drift so I was really looking forward to working on this issue.

Joana Lafuente—how did you get involved in Transformers, and what was your experience in coloring Casey's art? If I'm not mistaken, Spotlight: Drift was fairly early in your Transformers career. Was it an important issue for you?

JOANA LAFUENTE: That is correct! *Spotlight: Drift* was indeed one of my first works. Casey and I made our comic debut with *Spotlight: Blurr*, written by Shane McCarthy, too! Before that, we often collaborated on an online Transformers fan project. Although *Spotlight: Blurr* holds a very special place because it was a new approach to an existing character, *Spotlight: Drift* provided the engaging opportunity to collaborate on the comic that would introduce a new Transformers character, Drift, to the world. Oh, and let's not forget Turmoil, who was also introduced here. Just by the look, you can tell he's trouble!

What's your guys' process on the art—do you talk beforehand, pass notes, or what?

SM: I really like to talk a lot with artists when I'm scripting. Even before they see the finished script I'm usually talking with them about new characters or settings and so on. I like the artist to have an idea of what's going on before they read the script, so they've got a head start on it. Once Casey started on pencils he'd send them through to myself and the editor and I'd give notes and Denton would give notes. Casey was fantastic to work with.

CWC: Joana and I talked a bit about the style, particularly the backgrounds, which were done in pencil only, and colored over in more of a painted style than usual. Joana really had the vision for this, pitching samples to us for how she wanted the colors to look. I worked on the designs for any of the significant characters in the book, including Turmoil, some of the various aliens, and Drift's disguise. All of this bounced around on emails to make sure the whole group was satisfied with what was going on. For this issue, I actually roughed out the whole comic before I moved on to any of the finished pages, which was a luxury I don't always have.

JL: To be honest, we tend to be on the same page most of the time! I remember reading the script from Shane and

Below: Turmoil color tests by Casey W. Coller and Joana Lafuente.



imagining it in my head. When Casey's pages arrived, I just had to adapt the way I imagined it to what he drew. I also wanted this comic to have a special vibe with a painterly look. I asked Casey back then if he could make a very thin line-art to the backgrounds so they could blend better with the painting I had in mind and it helped a lot to achieve with that!

This was the first time we saw real hints of Drift's backstory, right? How much of that was planned out at this point?

SM: Oh it was all planned out at this point. The amount of time I spend on characters before scripting is ridiculous. I want to know everything about who they are so I know what they'd do in any given situation. At this point I knew about the Circle of Light and how he'd become a Decepticon and why he'd left them.

I just had a woman in Dubai come up to me and tell me Turmoil was her favorite character—and I loved the guy enough to bring him back in the *Robots in Disguise* series. What do you think makes the guy so compelling?

CWC: Wow, that's pretty awesome. I think there's something appealing about just a big, brutish villain... and one in all black with an enormous cannon on his arm makes him just a really intimidating figure.

Even though I did the actual drawing of him, I have to give a lot of credit to both Shane and Joana for their input on the design. Shane had the vision for the size and stature of him, noting details about his menacing and gritty appearance like the massive arm-cannon and the fact that he has a mask instead of a face. I took all that info and after a couple of sketches came up with his definitive look. Then when I passed it off to Joana, she took the ball and ran with it, coming up with the all-black color scheme. She later added the glowy details and Turmoil as we know him was born. I was extremely pleased when you brought him back in *Robots in Disguise*... and truthfully, there's part of me that believes he's still alive somewhere on Cybertron and we'll see him again!

SM: Turmoil's great, isn't he? The reason I love the guy is he's a real no-nonsense fella. When I was coming up with him I thought a lot about what it would take to be a Decepticon Commander; what kind of a person rises through the ranks? Not every guy is a Megatron but they have to have that steel will or else they'll be chewed up. Turmoil knows what he wants, he knows what needs to be done and he hasn't got time for stuffing around.

Weird fact—this comic is currently in print in, I think, six different places right at this moment. Hardcover, paperbacks, this deluxe book, and even a Micro-Comics Fun Pack you can get at mass market. Did you guys know you were creating a comic that was going to have that sort of a life?

SM: Absolutely not, no. You never know whether a comic is going to take off or even if anyone will like it. I know I



Page 11, panel 3 of *Spotlight: Drift*.

Art by Casey W. Collier, color by Joana Lafuente.

"When an unnamed Decepticon shoots Perceptor in his eye (causing him to eventually get his sniper-style eyepiece), I thought that was pretty significant. So when I was working on *Transformers: Ironhide #2*, I figured that guy would fit in as one of the sycophants in Drag Strip's posse... kind of a slimy character. I'm not sure how many people noticed, but it's just a little thing to add some weight to the story."

—Casey W. Collier

liked it and I liked writing it; outside of that it's all hoping for the best.

CWC: That's great. I actually didn't know about the Micro-Comics Fun Pack. I had a feeling early on that Drift could be something special, but I had no idea this issue itself would be reprinted that many times. After the issue came out, when I would appear at conventions doing sketches, Drift was right up there with Optimus Prime and Megatron in the frequently-requested-sketch category.

I could tell there was this groundswell of support for the character, and it was a really cool thing to be a part of. I think the fact that he's been selected as one of the characters to be translated into the fourth live-action movie speaks volumes about his popularity. I'm very proud of the work we did on the issue, and I'm really happy it's been so well liked as to have been reprinted so many times.

How did the *Drift* limited series by Shane and artist Alex Milne come about? Was it always planned, or did it grow out of the *All Hail Megatron* and *Spotlight* stories?

SM: It grew out of the response to *AHM* and the *Spotlight*. People wanted more and that's what we do at IDW, give people what they want!

ALEX MILNE: For myself, I am unsure how the series came about. I was asked by Denton Tipton if I would be interested in working on the project. At that time I was mostly working on the [Transformers] movie-related books so I jumped at the chance to do something in the G1 world.

DJT: Yes, the origin story that proved too big for the *Spotlight*, combined with the demand to see more of the character, led to the miniseries. Alex's kinetic, anime-inspired art was a perfect fit for Drift. It was to be my final *Transformers* project, and I wanted to go out with a bang and prove some of those early Drift naysayers wrong.

Alex, you transitioned over to IDW from Dreamwave via the *Megatron: Origins* series, right? As I understand it, that series was started at Dreamwave in some capacity, but was actually done for IDW.

AM: Yes, from what I understand, *Megatron: Origins* was originally a Dreamwave concept. As for transitioning over to IDW, my first book I worked on was the first live-action movie adaptation and then *Megatron: Origins*. It also (as far as I know) was going to originally be six issues but was cut down to four to fit the plans IDW had for Transformers comics that weren't the main series at that time.

The *Drift* limited series gave us an origin story for Drift—conceptually, what was the background of the character's allegiance-changes and his fairly bleak backstory? I think that search for meaning and truth that Drift follows is one of the really compelling things about the character.

AM: I feel this is more something for Shane to really dive into. I will say, from getting to work on the character more and seeing his growth over the years, Drift is one of those Cybertronians that really suffered from the corruption that occupied Cybertron for so long. I can see where a lot of the circumstances that hap-



Pencils for the retailer incentive cover from *Spotlight: Drift*.
Art by Casey W. Collier.

pened to him forced him in the direction his life took. Again, I feel this is more something Shane should really talk about. I really only draw the books.

SM: When I first thought of Drift, he was a character that was once a Decepticon but was now an (at times reluctant) Autobot. He wasn't a firm believer that either side had it right, but he knew he wanted the Decepticons stopped.

From there he grew into quite a complicated chap. What would it take to make you want to be a 'Con? Why did he become infamous in their ranks and known for his brutality? What would it take to change his mind?

In the end it came down to what he wanted most, and that was to belong somewhere (which he's still looking for, by the way). He was homeless and destitute on the streets of Cybertron. He's found and "saved" by a friend who is then killed (accidentally) by the Autobots. In a fit of rage, Drift kills the Autobots responsible and in doing so heads down a dark path which also exposes his natural aptitude for killing (specifically with guns). He's still looking to belong and looking to put an end to the Cybertron that made him what he is and took his friend away. He's snapped up by Megatron, renamed Deadlock, and brought into the Decepticon cause.

Being a soldier is one thing, but being a believer, that's a whole other level. Deadlock was a believer. The Decepticons would win and they would change every-



Drift sketch by Alex Milne.

thing for the better. If only the war would end, if the war was over then peace would reign... so Deadlock fought even harder still.

When the limited series kicked off, he's exiled by the 'Cons for insubordination and found by the Circle of Light, a group of Cybertronians who wanted no part in the war and went into hiding. Here Deadlock, now Drift again, learns the power of compassion. He learns he's been fighting on the wrong side and, in fact, that all sides in a war bring about destruction and pain. He realizes that the peace he was looking for could have been found in non-violent ways, and feels immense guilt for all the lives he took in pursuit of a dream to end suffering.

He's still looking for that, actually; he's still a little lost which is what the new series deals with. But I think he'll get there... eventually.

When Drift/Deadlock finds the Circle of Light, they include a bunch of previously-Japanese-only characters. For readers who don't know—the 1980s *Transformers* cartoon series ran for three seasons (and a handful of episodes) as an American production (airing in various forms in English-speaking countries) before shutting down, but in Japan, the series was popular enough to continue—with new characters. Anyway—whose idea was it to base the Circle around the Japanese characters?

SM: Denton. Well, at least that's where it started, anyway.

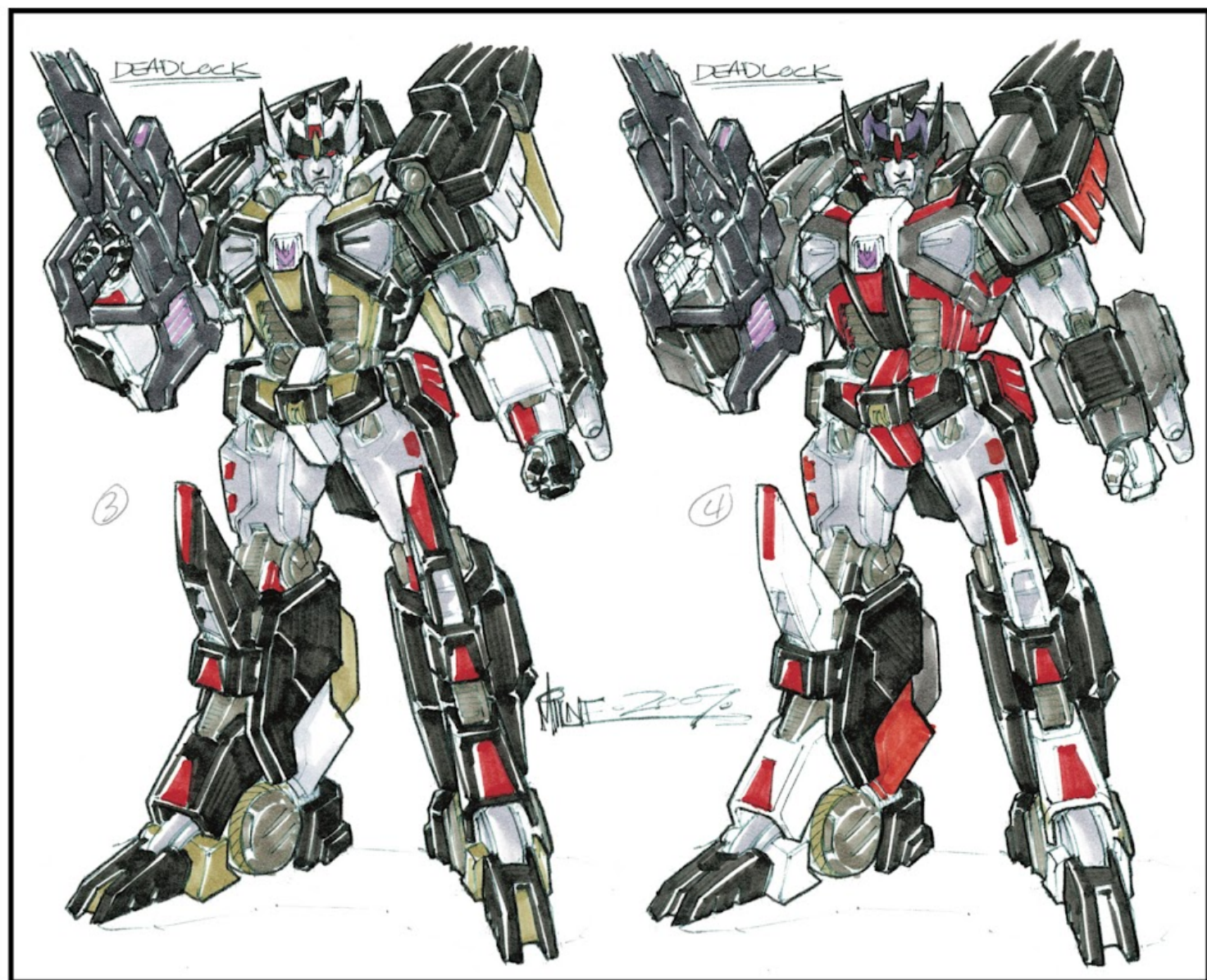
AM: I only remember Denton asking me if I knew any good Japanese characters that they could use. I ended up giving him a really small list, which was two characters. One was Victory Leo and the other was Dai Atlas. Guess we know who ended up getting used.

SM: Dai Atlas was originally called Dragoon, but Denton suggested I change the name to Dai Atlas for fun (I assume... maybe he just really hated "Dragoon"). I thought it was great, so I think it grew out of there.

DJT: We had been working with Shout Factory on their DVD re-issues of [the Japanese cartoon series] *The Headmasters*, *Masterforce*, and *Victory*, which exposed me for the first time to the Japanese-exclusive franchise. Transformers writer Chris Mowry loaned me a copy of *Transformers: Visualworks*, and I fell in love with the art style. Given Drift's nature, it seemed like the perfect entry point for some of those characters.

There is a really particular aesthetic to the look of the Circle—not just the 'bots, but the Crystal City and all the stuff surrounding them. What kind of work did you put into developing the look?

SM: The look all goes to Alex on this one. I know I described the hell out of everything, but I think Alex tends



Color studies for Drift in his Deadlock incarnation, by Alex Milne.



Lockdown makes the jump from animation to comics in *Drift* #2.
Art by Alex Milne, color by Josh Perez.

to bring a particular aesthetic to everything he does.

AM: When I started working on the project, I was told that all the Circle of Light characters should have a similar look to what Drift looks like from the *Spotlight*. So the look of their heads and shape of the shoulders should all have the same feel to them. Also a lot of the colors should be the same, so a lot of white and red.

As for Crystal City, I was told that it should look like a city on Cybertron before the war, just underground. I do believe that Crystal City wasn't the final name for it at the time, so I didn't have a specific look for the city at the time when I drew it. Had the name been finalized earlier I might have taken a different approach to the look of the city. As it stands now, I'm happy with how it turned out. Josh Perez did an amazing job coloring it to give it its signature look.

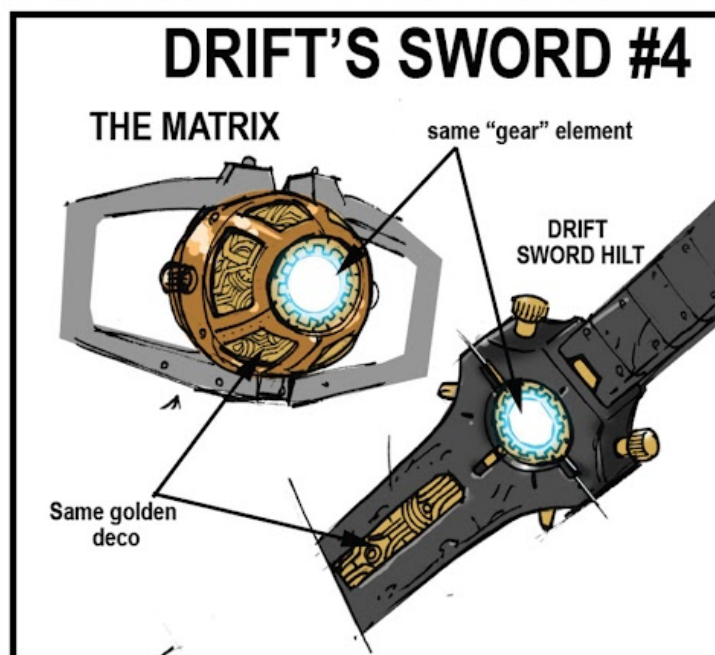
Lockdown was a character from *Transformers: Animated* who made his comics debut in the *Drift* limited series. What was the process of moving him into the comics world? How'd it come about, and what kind of redesign (visually and conceptually) went into him?

SM: You know what? I actually don't remember on this one. I went through old emails and couldn't find who initially thought to bring Lockdown into this. I want to go with Denton on this one. It would have been Denton or me but maybe it was Denton? Let's say it was Denton. Well done, Denton!

DJT: Thanks, Shane! Since we were already cross-pollinating among the different universes and needed a Decepticon to track Deadlock/Drift, Lockdown was a natural fit. Hasbro was all for it, and Shane and Alex translated him into the comics with flair!

SM: I do remember researching a lot about him and getting a feel for who he is. However, when it comes to bringing these guys into the comics universe it can never be cut and paste. You have to ask yourself how a character like this would act and interact with the comics universe. How would they differ to their *Animated* counterpart, and so on.

AM: When I first found out that we were getting Lockdown, I was very excited. I enjoy that character, and I now had a chance to give him a look in the comics. I originally came up with a different design that was used in the comics. Hasbro wanted us to use the figure that had come out in the *Revenge of the Fallen* line. I then came up with a design based on what they wanted, but had a slightly more G1 look to him, especially in the face. I did his alt mode at first as a flying car, but Hasbro wanted the wheels, so I put them back in. That's about it from me.



Design detail of Drift's Great Sword (as bequeathed to him by Dai Atlas).
Art by Guido Guidi.

Personally, *Drift* was one of my favorite Transformer comics that IDW published, before I started working here. And as I mentioned before—it's very popular among fans. What was the original reaction—or did you pay much attention to that?

SM: From memory, the reaction was extremely positive across the board. We got great reviews on the book and the fans loved it. A lot of people had been hoping to see more of him so the excitement had been building prior to this. The fans were very good to us.

AM: I think there was a lot of positive and negative reactions, but you'll get that with every fandom. We can't make something everybody will like. We can only do our best in trying to make a good story and hopefully people will enjoy the product we put out. If they do, that's great and I'm happy they enjoyed all the work put in. If they don't, all I can say is I guess we'll try harder to make something you will like.

I will take this time to say thank you to all the fans that support the creators and the books. Hopefully, we'll do

our best to create stuff you like.

Drift didn't play too much of a role in the Transformers series after the limited series—until he experienced a near-death experience in the “Chaos” story that Mike Costa co-wrote with James Roberts. What was your background with Transformers, James—and how'd you get involved in the comics?

JAMES ROBERTS: My first IDW comics work was a 2010 miniseries called *Last Stand of the Wreckers*, which I co-wrote with Nick Roche.

Nick and I had become friends years earlier, united by our shared love of Transformers (the UK comic in particular), and it was Nick who in 2008 had encouraged me to pitch some TF-related ideas to IDW. Nothing happened until summer 2009, when—long story short—I was asked to fill the co-writer vacancy on *Wreckers*.

In 2011, I wrote a two-parter chronicling Optimus Prime and Megatron's first meeting that appeared in the middle of Mike Costa's ongoing. The story, “Chaos Theory,” served as a very loose prelude to the *Chaos* event, which I helped Mike plot. When writing “Chaos Theory” and certainly when co-plotting *Chaos*, I knew that Drift was to be one of the main characters on the new ongoing I'd been asked to write, although to be honest I think his prominent role in *Chaos* owed more to the fact that he was popular with fans and had been somewhat underused since starring in his own miniseries.

This led to the launch of the *More Than Meets the Eye* ongoing, where he joined Rodimus on a quest to find the Knights of Cybertron, the spiritual forbearers of the Circle of Light. How did Drift wind up onboard the *Lost Light*?

JR: I'll be honest—I didn't pick him as a crewmember! And I'll go further—I don't know if I would have picked him had I known I had a choice! Drift being a main character in *MTMTE* has its origins in a story document written by one-time IDW editor Andy Schmidt. It was late 2009, and Andy was blocking out the next two or three years of Transformers stories; and as you'd expect, the further into the future he got, the less detail there was around the events being described. So there were a couple of sentences about the *Chaos* story, and then a line about how the Autobot forces are split in two (at this stage we hadn't worked out why that might be), and then, “Rodimus and Drift set off in search of the Knights of Cybertron.”

And you can trace *MTMTE*, and Drift's place on board the *Lost Light*, to those 12 words.

Why wasn't I keen to have Drift on board? It wasn't that I disliked the character; it was more a case of not knowing, at first, what to do with him... With nearly all the other characters, I was starting with a blank slate and building their backstories and, to an extent, their personalities. Drift had a history, and I had to work out how that history helped push the *MTMTE* forward. Also, what I wanted to

do with *MTMTE* was surround Rodimus with a team of... well, losers, really. I wanted flawed, quirky, awkward, D-list characters, and Drift was none of these things. He was cool, composed, skilled.

In the end, I tried to kill two birds with one stone: I decided I could use the near-death experience in *Chaos* to reorient the character as a touchy-feely “New Age” spiritualist type who, in contrast to his cynical, sarcastic crew-mates, was friendly, optimistic and supremely—almost irritatingly—positive. At least outwardly. He was also a Rodimus fanboy (for reasons that would become clear down the line) and chiefly for this reason had been made honorary third in command. His cheerful, trusting personality made him a good foil for the more sour, stern Ultra Magnus, but Drift's key *MTMTE* relationship is the one he has with Ratchet. It's a love/hate thing founded on irreconcilable philosophical differences.

Nick Roche gave Drift a redesign at this point. Nick, what were your thoughts on the look of the character, and your new design?

NICK ROCHE: Well, Drift was always a pretty-looking robot. Guido's initial design for him was really strong, managing to be very individualistic while retaining a timeless Transformers look. My approach when re-designing him was to think of him as a character first, and a machine life-form that could change shapes second. It's a method that has worked for the live-action and animated Transformers in recent times—the characters in *Transformers: Animated*, *Transformers Prime*, and the Dreamworks movies were all created with their mode-changing process as afterthoughts, and it can serve the character quite well, by putting the emphasis on them and their personality, physicality etc. (The Genius Farm at Hasbro can always work these things out if and when toys are spawned from these designs.)

With Drift, I played on the existing nods to his samurai influences. I flared out his thighs to give the semblance of the bulked-up, armored leg-wear of the samurai warrior, tapering the lower legs to emulate areas with less armor.



Drift joins Rodimus and the crew of the *Lost Light* in *More Than Meets the Eye* #1. Art by Nick Roche, color by Josh Burcham.



Drift in action for the first time, from *All Hail Megatron* #6.
Art by Casey W. Collier, colors by Joana Lafuente.

His shoulders now have that Samurai-armor look to them too, while I made his torso a little more slender and athletic, purely to give the overall look of a warrior in peak physical condition adorned with some crazy-cool armor. Overall, I really like the new silhouette of the character, and feel that it says a lot about Drift and his origins without needing too much other visual information. But it can't be overstated enough; Guido Guidi hit upon a really classic design when he cooked up Drift's original look.

Alex, you came in and started drawing *MTMTE* regularly with the second issue—how did you tweak Nick's design?

AM: All I really did was take what had been designed and put my own spin on it to fit into my drawing style. I did tweak his alt-mode a bit to fit into a more sports-car look, but overall I didn't do too much to him. I guess all I really did was detail him up.

What is Drift's journey in *MTMTE*—is he still searching for truth and acceptance?

AM: I'm not sure how James feels about this topic, but I feel that Drift in some way will always be searching for something greater and trying to make up for the things he did in the past. I still feel his character has a lot of growth that needs to happen. There is still a lot for him to do.

JR: Very much so, yes—in fact, out of all the 200 or so



Drift in action on the cover of *More Than Meets the Eye* #4.
Art by Alex Milne, color by Josh Perez.

people on the *Lost Light*, he is the one who most sincerely wants to find the Knights of Cybertron. We've established that many of his crewmates are there for other reasons, but for Drift all that matters is finding the Knights—or enabling others to find them.

And his journey is far from over!

James, what's your take on Drift as a character?

JR: There are two moments in *MTMTE* that to my mind give the most insight into his post-*Chaos* character.

In the 2012 *MTMTE Annual* he accuses Ratchet of believing in nothing, and Ratchet responds, "And you believe in everything. You're an ex-Decepticon carrying a lifetime of guilt. Every Autobot you murdered... is crouching on your back. It's not enlightenment you're after—it's absolute." And while I think Ratchet is being characteristically cynical, there's a grain of truth in what he's saying—Drift is sampling everything out there, every religion and lifestyle in the hope that one will give him peace of mind.

The second moment comes in *MTMTE* issue #16, when for the good of the quest he takes the blame for something Rodimus has done—something really awful, in fact. And he does this knowing that it will undo all the good work he's done over the years in terms of trying to persuade the other Autobots to trust and accept him.



Drift drifting; *Drift* #4.
Art by Alex Milne, color by Josh Perez.

Alex, how has your take on Drift changed over the years?

AM: Well, I guess I like the character more now since his time on *MTMTE*. James has found an interesting way on portraying the character that is different from what had been done with him before. I also really enjoy the expansion on his past that we got to see in the first part of [the three-issue *MTMTE* story] “Shadowplay.” That gave me greater sympathy for the character and what he went through in the past. It also gives a greater firmness to the reason why he turned out the way he did. Overall, Drift’s becoming a much more fleshed-out character that I enjoy working on.

Shane and Guido: what’s it like seeing Drift move into other mediums and becoming an integral part of the Transformers mythos?

SM: It’s cool. On one hand it’s a cool thing, wow, a character I thought of is growing up and being this whole other thing. On the other hand I have no say in how he’s treated so who knows if they’ll do a decent version. I’m being diplomatic here, it’s a real struggle for me, ha ha.

GG: Well, it’s like a certification that the character has reached his adulthood/maturity, and that he firmly has his place in the (ever growing) Transformers universe. I can’t wait to see future iterations of him! Maybe a *Beast Wars* Drift?

And what do you think of seeing the character handled by other creative teams? Any favorite moments from those teams?

SM: I got asked a lot about this by fans and to be honest I didn’t look at anything to do with Drift once I’d finished working on the miniseries. He’s not my character, I don’t own him and I preferred not to look when it came to other



Cover for the new *Drift* limited series.
Art by Alex Milne.

people taking him on. Given what I'm working on now I *had* to look—I went through and read everything that had been done with him and it was interesting. I liked seeing him done by someone else. I'll be honest, he wasn't the character I'd lined him up to be, but that's the nature of how all this works. Characters take on a life of their own and it's fun to see different writers' takes on who they are. It's kind of like friends sometimes. "Hey, remember when Steve was all into painting and that was his whole life? Yeah? Well now he's all about drag racing, go figure."

GG: At this point, other artists have handled Drift way more times than me, like Casey W. Collier and writer James Roberts with artist Alex Milne—they all did a fantastic job in developing the character, especially in putting him in relation to so many other characters and settings (just think about *More Than Meets the Eye*). I think he's been in very good hands so far!

You brought it up, Shane—but what are you guys working on now?

GG: A Wheelie ongoing... no, really... What about another *Drift* series?

SM: Funny you should ask! We're actually working on a new Drift miniseries called *DRIFT: EMPIRE OF STONE*. Words cannot express how excited I am to be working with Guido again! Drift's daddies are together again to finally do a Drift story!

What—no way—that'll be huge! What's it about?

SM: The mini kicks off after Drift was booted from the *Lost Light* and deals with what he's been doing since then. It's been a lot of fun because I'm incorporating the elements James brought to his character in the ongoing book while also bringing the focus back towards his internal struggles with what the war did to him and what it meant to switch sides.

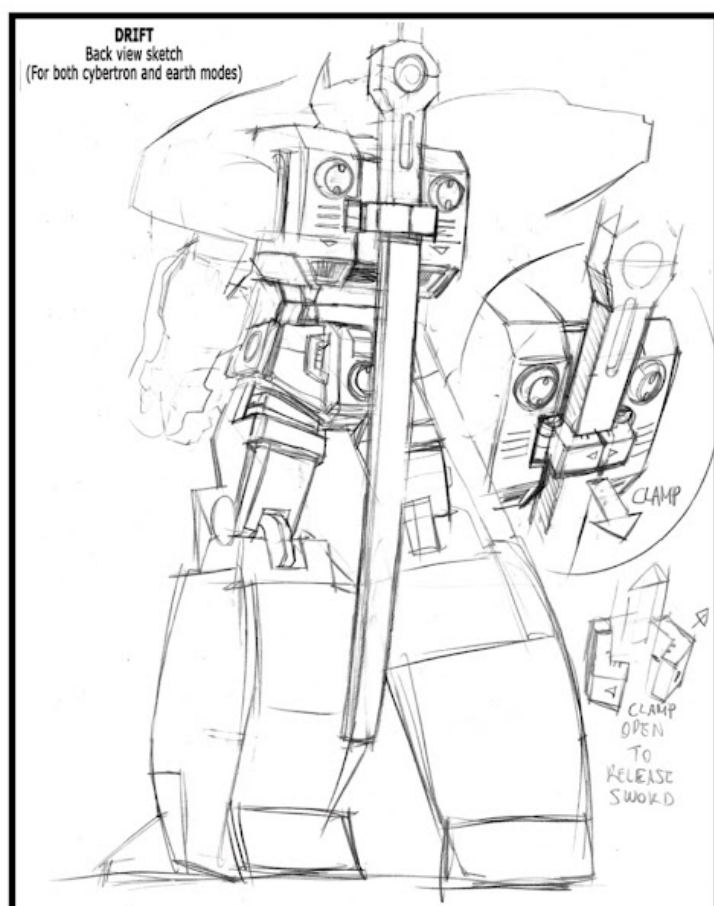
I'm including some great villains—seriously, they're so much fun, and I've also brought in Ratchet. I loved the chemistry James brought to those two so, as you know, I lobbied hard to be able to use Ratchet in this. There's rogue Decepticons, a hidden army, and a ton of action. Plus a good hard look at who Drift is underneath his cavalier exterior.

GG: Drift, like a wandering samurai... in space! After leaving the *Lost Light*, he's been pretty much on his own, and guess what—the universe is still full of bad guys... and some unexpected friends.

Well, I can't wait. Any final words for Drift fans?

SM: To all the Drift fans out there I want to say thank you. Thank you for all the support, thank you for the emails and tweets. It's wonderful to hear from you and I'm keeping you all firmly in mind as I write this new series.

GG: A big "thank you" to them—it's great to see an original character getting such support and going so far, and becoming a way to expand the Transformers Universe with new amazing stories. I'm fairly confident that fans will love the next set of Drift's adventures!

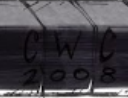


Drift's back! Early design art by Guido Guidi.





Spotlight: Drift cover B by Guido Guidi and Joana Lafuente.



Spotlight: Drift retailer incentive cover
by Casey W. Coller and Joana Lafuente.

TRANSFORMERS

Shane McCarthy

October 15th, 2008
Prepared for Denton Tipton
Proposal for Spotlight

SPOTLIGHT DRIFT

TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT: DRIFT

THE PREMISE:*The Galaxy's Greatest Killer*

Even amongst a race of murderous villains, he was despised. His sadistic, twisted and evil nature sought only destruction and slaughter. He gazed upon everything with equal measures of unbridled hatred and longed only for the day when he saw everything around him burn.

There wasn't a Decepticon alive that came close to his level of violence and not one in all of their ranks that felt safe at his side. Enemies and allies alike were fodder to his cannons.

So it was no great surprise when, on a distant planet, he was left to die by his own kind.

Yet, rather than finding death, he found something he never thought possible...the path to redemption.

THE BREAKDOWN:*The Path to Redemption*

After being shot down and left to die by his fellow Decepticons the Cybertronian who would later become Drift seemed lost. Raging at the heavens and filled with insurmountable hate he sought to find his way off the planet; intending to kill everything along the way.

What he discovers is the most infuriatingly annoying blacksmith he could ever imagine. The blacksmith, armed with a giant, Cybertronian sword, seeks to find the answers behind Drift's arrival and purpose; answers the Decepticon is more than reluctant to give out.

What follows is a test of wills and character as the blacksmith slowly wears the Decepticon down, physically and mentally; exposing his weaknesses, flaws and, ultimately, hidden strengths.

What Drift doesn't know is the blacksmith belongs to an order of Cybertronians once charged with the tuition of the Primes. When the Great War began these Tutors left, along with many others, and refused to join any of the growing factions.

The result of this battle of wits is the evolution of a once despised murderer into a highly trained, deeply peaceful warrior.

He arrived a Decepticon and will leave to become one of the greatest warriors in the Autobot army.

Spotlight: Drift

22 PAGES

BY SHANE McCARTHY

The old team's back together again eh, Case? It's great to be working with you again; we're going to have a lot of fun with this. There's a lot more action in this than Blurr so get that pencil ready! Also, I'll point it out now, Drift is in his Cybertronian mode here. He wasn't been to Earth yet so we're dealing with the hovercraft version.

PAGE ONE

PANEL 1

Establishing shot. Interior of a dimly lit, hole of a bar. The place is frequented by dirty looking, shadowy types. Imagine something you'd find in a Bangkok shanty town. We're on an outworld and these guys represent everything from murders and thieves to down on their luck traders and out of work miners. The bar isn't even remotely futuristic and, if anything, has an industrial look about it. The main feature though is all of the inhabitants are huge; Transformer size but normal size for the bar. We don't know it yet but this is a hub planet that sees visitors from around the galaxy. This particular bar is home to the larger of the lifeforms. Wherever you can, Case, go for a less humanoid appearance. Humanoid is fine but nothing lean. Near the back corner of the bar we can see a heavily robed figure talking with a female alien. The heavily robed figure is Drift but we don't know it yet. He has his features completely covered with sandy coloured robes and wrap. Every inch of his body is covered. I've sent you some resource for his look at the start of this. What I'm imagining is the sort of thing you'd see people wearing in ancient Mongolia. Material bound to the body with twine or rope. Thick, heavy clothing you'd use to block out the wind and cold. He wears a hood and his large sword is leaning against the wall beside him, also wrapped in material. The bar is bustling with customers; the crowds are thick. The female alien, the Informant, is quite striking in appearance and is handing Drift something small. She's flanked by two large and impressive bodyguard types. The Informant is an underworld figure of some sort and has the air of someone used to getting their way.

PANEL 2

Close in on their hands as she's handing Drift what look like high tech keycards.

1 INFORMANT

These will get you in, but only so far as the docking platform.

2 INFORMANT

You won't have access to the ship.

PANEL 3

Drift tucks them into his robes. The Informant smiles a slightly sexy and manipulative smile.

3 DRIFT

You've done more than enough. Thank you.

4 INFORMANT

"Thank you"? You pay well, you've been here long enough to know your thanks isn't necessary.

PANEL 4

Drift turns to leave. The informant is watching him with a smile.

PANEL 5

Drift has stopped dead in his tracks because of the informant's words. She's still smiling, searching his reaction for any sign of his true motivations.

5 INFORMANT

The cruiser, it's Cybertronian...



PAGE TWO

PANEL 1

Drift faces the informant once again. He holds his wrapped sword casually at his side but we get the feeling he's preparing for a possible battle.

1 DRIFT

That's right.

2 INFORMANT

Cybertronians docking here—Docking anywhere—It's unheard of.

PANEL 2

One of the body guards, a mean looking SOB, turns to spit on the floor as he speaks.

3 BODYGUARD

Cybertronians.

4 SFX

Ptoo

5 BODYGUARD

Death to the lot of 'em.

PANEL 3

Close on the informant as she turns to snap at the bodyguard. Her face is fierce.

6 INFORMANT
Keep your voice down!

PANEL 4
The bodyguard looks confused.

7 BODYGUARD
But--You hate them as much as anyone. Why--

PANEL 5
Close on Drift.

8 DRIFT
Decepticons.

PANEL 6
Close on the bodyguard, now looking fearful and meek at the mention of the word.

9 BODYGUARD (quietly)
Decepticons?

PANEL 7
Open out to show the group. The informant is smiling again, watching Drift, she's showing she knows more than she's supposed to. The bodyguard is looking around now, expecting a Decepticon to jump out at any minute.

10 INFORMANT
The cruiser is a Decepticon vessel.

11 INFORMANT
Apparently they've come in from the outer reaches. Damaged.

12 INFORMANT
And they have prisoners.

13 BODYGUARD
Autobots?

14 INFORMANT
Who else?

PAGE THREE

PANEL 1
The informant still wears her seductive smile; forever a creature of manipulation and secrets; always after information.

1 INFORMANT
I'm not sure what business you have with the ship but you may wish to reconsider, Friend.

2 INFORMANT
Cybertronians are a plague. Wherever they go, death and destruction follow.

3 INFORMANT
Everyone else is smart enough to simply leave them alone.

PANEL 2
The informant has reached out delicately and has a hand on Drift's arm. Her hand is on his forearm and has a caring but slightly flirtatious tone to the gesture.

4 DRIFT
Your concern is--

5 INFORMANT
It's not concern. I told you, you pay w--

PANEL 3
On the informant as she pulls her hand back in shock, as though she just touched something distasteful.

PANEL 4
Similar shot, she's now unconsciously holding her hand at the wrist; acting as though she's been burned or that her hand has been sullied in some way. The look on her face is one of distaste.

6 INFORMANT
Your arm...

7 INFORMANT
You--You're one of them.

PANEL 5
Drift bows as he takes his leave.

8 DRIFT
Again, my thanks.

PANEL 6
Drift walks towards the exit of the bar. The informant and her men are on one side of the panel in the foreground. The informant has a look of quiet distaste, bordering on hatred as she watches Drift go.

PAGE FOUR

PANEL 1
Wide thin panel. High angled shot looking down as Drift exits the pub into the street. Around him we can see a few lifeforms his size but we can also make out a lot of human sized lifeforms on the ground. Creatures of all shapes and sizes come here.

PANEL 2
Large panel, most of the page. We're looking up and past Drift who's in the foreground. The city beyond him is made of giant skyscrapers that are interlocked by bridges and pathways. Old, beat up vehicles fly around in the air resembling the typical inner city traffic. The sun is setting and we can see the light coming through the giant metal buildings. We can see Drift looking up at a massive Decepticon cruiser that's docked in a part of the city above him. The cruiser is vast and incredibly imposing as it looms over the city.

PANEL 3
Wide thin panel. We're looking down on Drift again. This time he's looking up and we can finally see into his hood and know for sure that it's Drift. His face isn't clearly lit but we can see he has a quiet, determined look on his face.

PAGE FIVE

PANEL 1
Distance shot of the ship, we're above it, showing how high it is above the ground.

PANEL 2
Close in to see a small figure on the top of the ship. It's Drift and he's on one knee. One hand is on the ship keeping his balance as his other arm is up and back. He's completely 'naked' and revealed here. A ferocious wind is whipping past him; the hand that's behind him was holding his robes but has let the wind take them as he prepares to sneak into the vessel. I'm thinking that, in this shot, we can show that most of Drift's "sticky outy bits" have been folded down under his robes (like wings pulled in). In the next shot we can have him appearing as normal with his shoulder units out, like he's stretched everything out now that he's "free" to be himself.

PANEL 3
Close in. Drift is pressing a button on either side of a service hatch. The hatch is sliding open. Drift appears comfortable; he's done this before.

PANEL 4

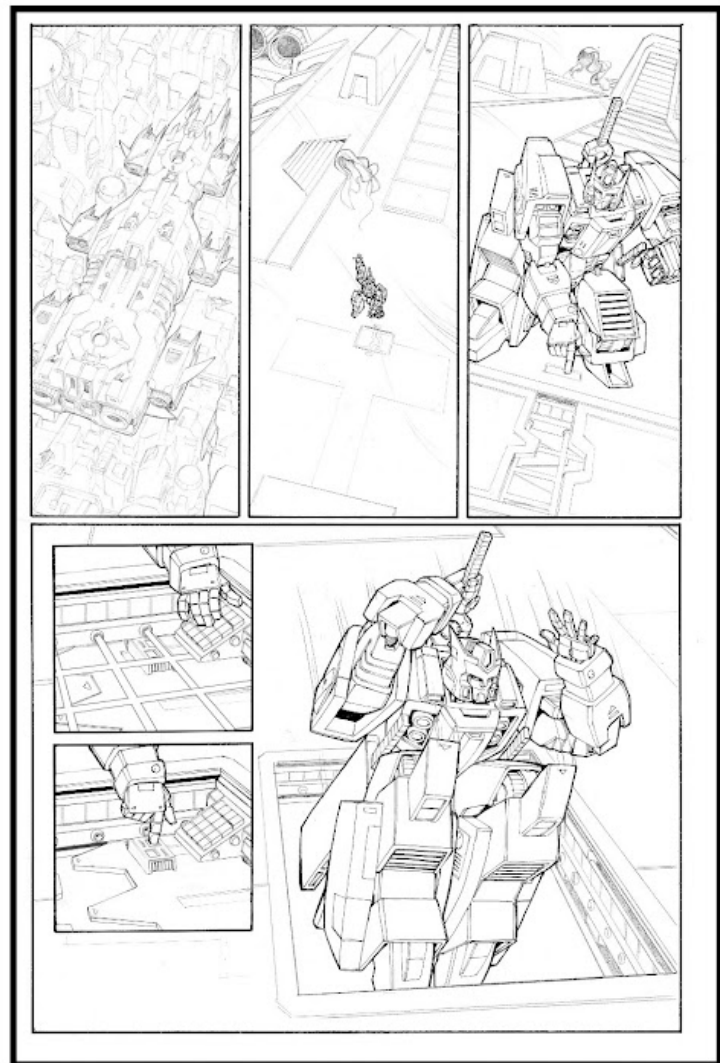
Tight on his hands. We can see he's entering a code sequence into a panel underneath the hatch. There's another hatch door beneath this one that's guarded by cross lasers.

PANEL 5

Similar shot. The lasers are gone and Drift has activated another button to slide open the second hatch door.

PANEL 6

Pull back to see Drift smiling as he leaps feet first into the hatchway. All of Drift's movements should be a combination of stealth like movement and swashbuckling flamboyance. Errol Flynn as a ninja ;)



PAGE SIX

PANEL 1

Large panel. Interior shot. Drift is in mid air, dropping down from the ceiling with grace. The interior of the vessel is dark and silent.

PANEL 2

Close in to show Drift's hand and feet just as they're about to touch the ground. They're emitting a soft cushion of air (or force field) to cushion his landing so he's not actually touching the floor. His Cybertronian alt mode is a hover craft and here we see he can use the air cushion from his hands and feet in robot form too.

PANEL 3

Same shot, he now touches down on the floor without a sound.

PANEL 4

Drift is sailing along the floor in a sliding, kneeled position (one hand out); think longboard or snowboard riders when they're carving (see resource). He's using the air cushion to move into position without a sound. He's head-

ing for the corner of the hallway and he's getting ready to peek around the side. This is how I imagine Drift getting around when he needs to be quiet. The shot could be taken from behind when he's heading for the corner, or from the corner as he's heading to it; whichever you prefer.

PANEL 5

Drift is peering around the corner as he quietly slides one of his short swords from the sheath. Around the corner we can see a large group of Cons milling about in the hall.

PAGE SEVEN

PANEL 1

The wall of the hallway suddenly explodes in. The Cons are blown in all directions. Drift is shielding his face.

PANEL 2

Large panel, most of the page.

Kup, armed with his rifle and in his new AHM design, is walking through the gaping hole in the wall. The powerful war veteran is here and looking as though this is just an ordinary day for him. "Stogie" in mouth he's peering around with one of his "Eastwood" glares. Right by his side is Springer and behind the two of them are Perceptor (pre AHM design), Roadbuster (AHM design) and Twin Twist. The Autobots are raiding the ship.

1 KUP

Clean 'em up! We've got work to do!

PANEL 3

On Drift, smirking.

2 DRIFT

So much for quiet...

PAGE EIGHT

PANEL 1

Cut to an interior shot of the private sanctuary of our Decepticon leader, Turmoil. A Decepticon officer (background of shot) is standing in the doorway, clearly flustered, and speaking to his commander; he brings urgent news. The room is in almost complete darkness save for the light spilling in through the doorway. We can see Turmoil to the right of shot, his back to the door. He's only partially in view and was clearly enjoying some solitary brooding time. Turmoil's face is in shadow. He's not exactly happy being interrupted.

1 OFFICER

Commander Turmoil!

2 TURMOIL

Speak.

PANEL 2

The officer delivers the news.

3 OFFICER

Commander, the ship has been breached!

PANEL 3

Turmoil is standing now. He's turned to face the officer and is furious. Turmoil is a large, "muscular" looking Decepticon. He's the kind of guy that looks like he could take down Roadbuster. He has a gun arm ala Shockwave but instead of something pristine and high tech looking his gun looks ugly and brutal.

4 TURMOIL

Breached?! Who dares?!

PANEL 4

The officer continues to explain whilst Turmoil fumes.

5 OFFICER
A small assault force.

6 TURMOIL
Our sensors picked them up?

7 OFFICER
Not exactly.

PANEL 5
On the officer looking uncomfortable sharing such outlandish news

8 OFFICER
The group just—Well—They just blew a hole in the side of the ship.

PANEL 6
Turmoil slams his fist down on a nearby counter.

PANEL 7
Close on Turmoil's face as he seethes.

9 TURMOIL
Kup.

10 CAPTION
Who's that guy?

PAGE NINE

PANEL 1
Cut back to the hallway for a fast and furious shot as we see the Autobots in a fire fight with the Decepticons. They're making short work of the Cons and looking brilliant whilst doing it. Kup is in the middle of it all, firing away and taking one down. Drift in the action as he attacks a Con with his sword, slicing through his face.

PANEL 2
On Kup and Springer as they fire their weapons out of shot. They're talking in the middle of battle (the norm for them). Also, remember Kup is supposed to be the same height as Springer.

1 KUP
He's no Autobot, that's for sure.

2 SPRINGER
Well he's not a Decepticon.

3 SPRINGER
That sword on his back look familiar to you?

4 KUP
The sword. No faction. It's unbelievable but—Gotta be...

PANEL 3
Kup is firing his weapon as he moves towards Drift, calling over his shoulder as he fires in the other direction. It's a lazy, after thought of a shot (maybe even one handed). There's no Cons left and we get the feeling that the battle has just been won. Drift is calling back, grinning as he pulls his sword from the body of a Con.

5 KUP
You!

6 KUP
What are you doin' here?

7 DRIFT
Well, I was trying to sneak in.

8 KUP
Yeah. We don't do subtle.

PANEL 4
The action has subsided. Kup looks at Drift, thinking.

Perceptor is leaning in close to Drift and giving him a close inspection (what you'd expect from a scientist). Drift looks impressed by Perceptor's ability.

9 PERCEPTOR
This is extraordinary.

10 PERCEPTOR
You've been upgraded recently, reconfigured, but in a manner I haven't seen used in centuries. Yet the technology is completely comparable with—

11 PERCEPTOR
Whose work is this?

12 DRIFT
Amazing. You can tell all that just by looking?

13 KUP
Hnh. You don't know the half of it.

PANEL 5
As Kup orders everyone to move on Drift interjects.

14 KUP
We gotta move.

15 KUP
New guy, you're with us. We gotta talk once this is through. Keep to the back and—

16 DRIFT
Actually, it's probably best I take the lead.

17 DRIFT
No offense but, I'm here for the same reason as you.

PANEL 6
Small panel. Tight on Kup's face, eyebrow raised and looking skeptical.

18 Drift (op)
And I can take you straight to them.

PAGE TEN

PANEL 1
Cut to a shot inside the cell room of the Decepticon cruiser. The room is large with cells down the side that were previously cordoned off with laser bars (we can see some of the bars being deactivated). There's a couple of dead Cons on the floor near the giant entry doors. The doors are closed and we can see Perceptor fiddling with the control panel. Drift, Kup and the others are freeing their friends and we can see a slightly battered Top Spin, Sandstorm, Broadside, Blurr, Whirl and Blaster. It's a little bit of a reunion as we see the captured Autobots happy to see their friends.

PANEL 2
On Perceptor. He's calling back to the others as he still works the panel.

1 PERCEPTOR
They're here!

2 PERCEPTOR
It appears they're attempting to break through my locks.

3 KUP (op)
Hold 'em off long enough for us to cut through the other wall.

PANEL 3
Cut to a shot of the hallway. There's a large group of Cons waiting there. We can see Turmoil is waving away an officer that had just previously been working on the control panel. The officer is backing away and looking up at Turmoil as Turmoil is looking at the panel (or the wall around it).

PANEL 4

Back on Perceptor as he talks. His attention is completely on the panel now.

4 PERCEPTOR

That's odd. Now they've stopped.

5 PERCEPTOR

I'm going to add several more blocks to the ones I already planted within the system.

6 PERCEPTOR

I can't imagine they'll be able to break through any time soon.

7 PERCEPTOR

In fact—

PAGE ELEVEN

PANEL 1

A large laser blast rips through the wall and tears a gaping hole through Perceptor's chest! Perceptor's face is wide with shock and surprise.

PANEL 2

The doors to the cell room are now wide open and Turmoil and his men stand there looking ominous. Turmoil is looking particularly evil as he issues his line; steam issues from his gun; he took the shot. Perceptor is on the ground to the side of Turmoil and his men; he's crumpled and looking like he's on his last legs.

1 TURMOIL

Shoot your mouth off, give your position away.

2 TURMOIL (CONT'D)

Amateurs.

PANEL 3

The room erupts into a shoot off with the Autobots on one side and the Cons on the other. One of Turmoil's men is offhandedly finishing off Perceptor by shooting him through the right eye.

PANEL 4

Drift is surging out of the Autobot ranks and charging towards Perceptor, swords in hand. Laser fire is ripping through the room all around him.

3 KUP (op)

Get back here!

PAGE TWELVE

PANEL 1

Drift is sliding dramatically as he ducks a laser blast. He's getting nearer to Perceptor.

1 DRIFT

I'm here to save lives.

2 DRIFT

If there's the slightest chance, that's what I'll do.

PANEL 2

An explosion knocks Drift flying back.

PANEL 3

Turmoil stands over Drift, looming. His gun steams as he glares. Drift, on the floor, looks like he's backing away and preparing to escape.

3 TURMOIL

You.

4 TURMOIL

I know you. Your voice...

PANEL 4

Drift is running back in the direction of the Autobots.

PANEL 5

Close in as Drift turns back at the sound of his name.

5 TURMOIL (op)

Deadlock!

PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL 1

On Turmoil as he roars and points at Drift (op).

1 TURMOIL (shouting)

Decepticon traitor!

PANEL 2

Drift is just reaching the Autobots as the Decepticon barrage of fire increases. The blasts are causing small explosions all around them.

PANEL 3

Turmoil, enraged, aims his gun arm and is charging it up for a MASSIVE blast.

PANEL 4

Turmoil fires into the group of Bots. The blast is immense and causes a huge explosion that rips through the wall behind them, tearing it apart. It's massive.

PANEL 5

Drift and Kup are falling/flying down and back through a hole created by the explosion. They've been separated from the others by the blast. The area they're falling into is dark.

PAGE FOURTEEN

PANEL 1

Chatty page! Most of these will be head shots. Kup and Drift drag themselves up from the floor. Around them we can see the twisted, burning metal from the ceiling and wall has crashed down around them. They've been completely cut off from the room above. It's dark save for the fire light.

PANEL 2

Kup turns to Drift.

1 KUP

So you are a Decepticon.

2 DRIFT

No.

3 KUP

Deadlock.

4 DRIFT

I don't go by that name anymore.

PANEL 3

Kup picks his "Stogie" up from the floor.

5 KUP

That's helpful, considering Deadlock happened to have slaughtered quite a few Autobots.

PANEL 4

Kup talks as he brushes off his "stogie".

6 KUP

Long time ago. So long ago it's become muddled as to the outcome, there was a third faction.

7 KUP

Well, more of a faction against factions.

PANEL 5

Kup continues, "stogie" in mouth.

8 KUP

A group formed on Cybertron, a big one, a group that refused to have any part of the Great War.

9 KUP

Refused to take sides. Up and left.

10 KUP

No one's sure what happened to 'em.

PANEL 6

On Drift.

11 KUP

Some think they died, some think they went off and hid, most are so busy with all the killing they don't even care.

12 KUP

Big, old mystery.

13 KUP

Although, I'm thinking by the look of that sword you know different.

PANEL 7

Kup continues.

14 KUP

Found 'em, didn't you?

15 DRIFT

Yes.

16 KUP

That meeting have anything to do with you leavin' the 'Cons?

17 DRIFT

Everything.

PAGE FIFTEEN

PANEL 1

Kup talks and Drift sits on some rubble, his hands on his knees as he looks up at Kup.

1 KUP

All that killing and you're looking for a second chance...

2 DRIFT

I already received it.

3 DRIFT

I'm looking to make a difference. To use the chance I was given.

4 KUP

I know all about second chances.

PANEL 2

Kup is looking down at his body.

5 KUP

That 'Bot you tried to save in there—Perceptor—He wouldn't normally be along. Not the type.

6 KUP

He was keepin' an eye out, for me. Designed this new body, fixed it so I was my old self again—Better even.

PANEL 3

Kup looks down at Drift, hands on hips.

7 KUP

Anyway it—Look, you didn't owe him anything, but you

tried.

8 KUP

I know all about second chances.

PANEL 4

Kup goes to walk off.

9 KUP

We better get a move on.

10 DRIFT (op)

Wait.

PANEL 5

On Drift looking up at Kup, a serious look on his face.

11 DRIFT

I know I'm no Autobot.

12 DRIFT

I'm not sure what I am but...

13 DRIFT

...How would you feel about bringing this whole place down?

PANEL 6

Close on Kup.

14 KUP

I'm listenin'

PAGE SIXTEEN

PANEL 1

We're now in the engine room. I'm imagining this in a Star Trek meets the TARDIS way with a giant energy unit powering the ship. Several Cons are scattered about (there'd been a fight) and Drift is busy flipping switches and reprogramming the engine. Kup is in the background looking out of an open circular vent portal that leads to the outside air. There's control switches around it and we can assume they opened the hatch ready to jump out.

1 DRIFT

Almost done.

2 DRIFT (CONT'D)

The ship will be forced to achieve orbit.

3 DRIFT (CONT'D)

Sometime between now and then this will overload and tear the ship apart.

PANEL 2

Exterior shot looking in. We're on the outside of the vent portal and we're looking at Kup as he peers through.

4 KUP

You know an awful lot about this place...

PANEL 3

On Drift, busy at the controls.

5 DRIFT

I served under Turmoil. Second in command.

PANEL 4

Kup moves back into the room a little and is looking at a small readout on his forearm.

6 KUP

The others have made it out. Springer's bringing our ship around.

7 KUP

We jump from a height, he can scoop us up.

8 DRIFT

This is set. We need to be quick—

PANEL 5

An explosion rips through the door to the room!

PAGE SEVENTEEN

PANEL 1

Turmoil stands in the burning doorway looking nightmarish.

PANEL 2

Drift shouts at Kup to leave. Kup is making a stand but is directly in front of the vent.

1 DRIFT

Go!

2 DRIFT

I'll take care of this!

PANEL 3

Drift shouts again.

3 DRIFT

Go!

PANEL 4

A blast from Turmoil's gun strikes the ground between them. Kup flies backwards through the vent whilst Drift is sent in the other direction.

PANEL 5

On Turmoil's face.

4 TURMOIL

We thought you'd died, Deadlock.

5 TURMOIL

I thought I'd been robbed of this pleasure.

PAGE EIGHTEEN

PANEL 1

On Drift, half crouching, haven risen from the ground. He's looking ready to fight, both swords drawn.

1 DRIFT

Deadlock is dead.

2 DRIFT

My name is Drift.

PANEL 2

Turmoil fires. Drift ducks and charges.

3 TURMOIL

Like it makes a difference.

4 TURMOIL

How does this work?

PANEL 3

Another blast. Drift dodges but this one clips his side, causing damage. It doesn't slow him down.

5 TURMOIL

You killed for us, now you kill for them?

6 TURMOIL

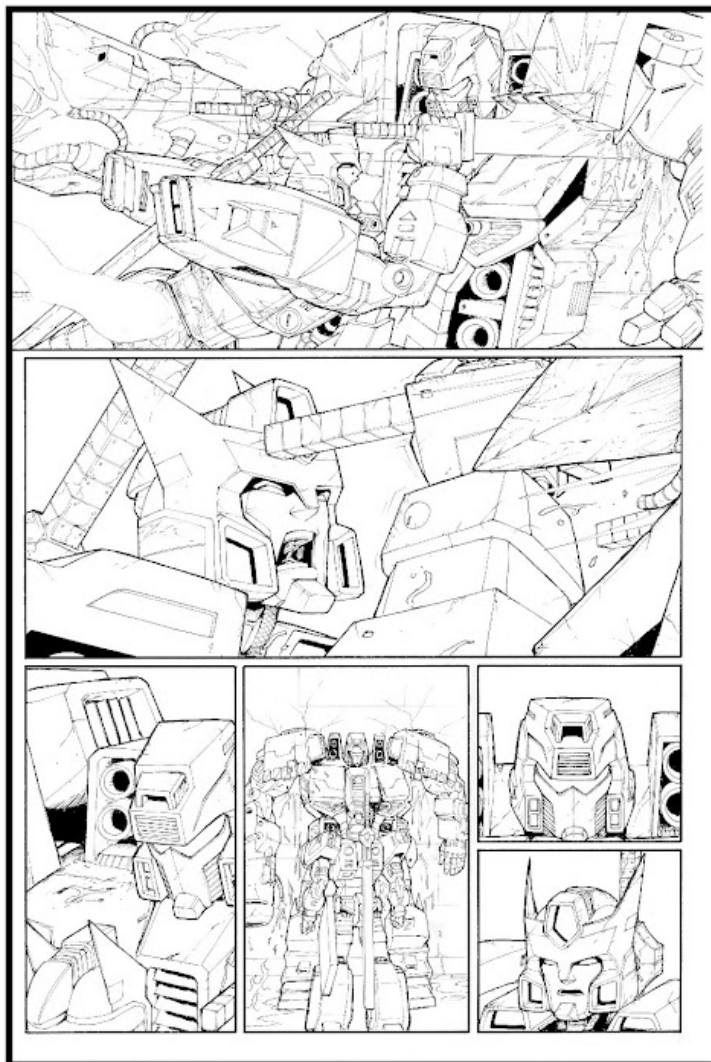
You're pathetic.

PANEL 4

Drift is in a low position, slicing upwards with one sword cutting a line up along Turmoil's middle. The other sword is parrying Turmoil's cannon as it fires again. Drift's attack is throwing Turmoil back towards the wall, he's calling out in pain.

7 TURMOIL

Argh!



PAGE NINETEEN

PANEL 1

Two large panels, the others smaller. Move in a little with the shot as Drift lunges forward with both swords, throwing his body weight behind the attack. He drives the swords through each of Turmoil's shoulders, pinning him to the wall (show some fluid leakage to give the impression Drift has cut the mechanisms to Turmoil's arms). Drift has a fierce look on his face.

PANEL 2

Drift leans in, still applying pressure to the swords, as he shouts at Turmoil.

1 DRIFT

We're going about this the wrong way, all of us!

2 DRIFT

Countless centuries of fighting...

3 DRIFT

...The Autobots are a step away from what we were when all this started.

4 DRIFT

And us—The Decepticons have become something worse than any of us could have imagined.

PANEL 3

Close on Turmoil as he leans his head closer to Drift and sneers a reply.

5 TURMOIL

They'll never accept you.

6 TURMOIL

You're nothing but a broken outcast.

PANEL 4

Drift stands back as Turmoil, pinned to the wall, torments him.

7 TURMOIL
Do it. Kill me.

8 TURMOIL
Kill me and run.

9 TURMOIL
Prove you're nothing more than what you were when you left.

PANEL 5
Close on Turmoil.

10 TURMOIL
It's what you came here to do.

PANEL 6
Close on Drift looking calm and confident.

11 DRIFT
I know what I came here to do.

PAGE TWENTY

PANEL 1
Five tiered page. All thin wide shots. Drift runs through the doorway leading back into the ship. Fire has almost completely engulfed the doorway as oil on the floor has caught light. We can see some electricity arcing across the room; the engines about to blow.

PANEL 2
Drift is running down a corridor and changing into his hovercraft mode. All around him panels on the wall are exploding. The ships on its last legs.

PANEL 3
Now in vehicle mode Drift is roaring down a hallway.

PANEL 4
Back in robot mode Drift skids sideways into shot (we can't see his whole body as this is taken from the ground level). In the foreground we see Perceptor's body lying on the ground.

PANEL 5
Focus on Perceptor's body as Drift carefully lifts him in his arms. We can't see Drift's face. Perceptor is extremely messed up but we can JUST make out what seems to be the slightest signs of life in his left eye.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

PANEL 1
Large panel. Most of the page. Exterior shot, high in the sky as the ship explodes into a giant ball of flame. Chunks of the ship are flying in all directions and we can see the silhouette of two Bots falling from the craft.

PANEL 2
Close on Drift as he plummets backwards whilst he holds Perceptor close to him. They made it out.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

PANEL 1
Interior of the Autobot shuttle. Springer is walking from the front piloting section towards Kup. The other bots are scattered about. This is a small sized ship used for short range pick ups.

1 SPRINGER
I've made contact with the Trion. We'll be docking shortly.

2 SPRINGER
They've been informed, all six Autobots retrieved and accounted for.

PANEL 2
Close in on the two. Springer looks confused. Kup is looking out of shot towards Drift.

3 KUP
Seven.

4 SPRINGER
Seven?

PANEL 3
Kup stands before Drift. Drift is seated, no-one else is sitting near him. If anyone else is in shot (which is fine if they're not) they should look shocked.

5 KUP
I'm forming a new unit. I want you on it.

PANEL 4
Springer starts to interject but Kup holds up a hand to tell him to stop. Kup is looking at Drift.

6 SPRINGER
Kup—

7 KUP
What do you say? Willing to wear the badge?

PANEL 5
Drift shakes Kup's hand.

8 DRIFT
Of course.

PANEL 6
On Kup and Springer. Springer is talking close, keeping his voice down from the others.

9 SPRINGER
Kup, this isn't wise...

10 KUP
He proved himself down there. You saw it.

11 KUP
There's more to fighting this war than just blowin' off heads.

12 KUP
Besides, you of all people should know...

PANEL 7
Open out to have Drift in the foreground with Kup and Springer looking on from the background. Or, if space is an issue, simply focus on Drift, his head down, looking at peace.

13 KUP
...Everyone deserves a second chance.

14 CAPTION
End.





SPOTLIGHT: DRIFT

Page Progression

Left: Work-in-progress page by Casey W. Collier, with inked figures and background layouts.

Below: Final black and white art by Casey W. Collier with penciled background.

Bottom Left: Colors by Joana Lafuente





Who is the mysterious DRIFT and what secrets lie in his dark and tormented past?

The answers are here in this special DIRECTOR'S CUT version of TRANSFORMERS SPOTLIGHT: DRIFT. Reprinting Drift's debut solo adventure and packed with all-new features such as creator interviews, the original script, behind-the-scenes info, and so much more—this is everything you need to know about the fan-favorite TRANSFORMERS character.

